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GEORGE MEREDITH

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ESSAY

ESSAY

ON THE IDEA OF COMEDY AND OF THE USES OF THE COMIC SPIRIT[1]

Good Comedies are such rare productions, that notwithstanding the wealth of our literature in the Comic element, it would not occupy us long to run over the English list. If they are brought to the test I shall propose, very reputable Comedies will be found unworthy of their station, like the ladies of Arthur's Court when they were reduced to the ordeal of the mantle.

There are plain reasons why the Comic poet is not a frequent apparition; and why the great Comic poet remains without a fellow. A society of cultivated men and women is required, wherein ideas are current and the perceptions quick, that he may be supplied with matter and an audience. The semi-barbarism of merely giddy communities, and feverish emotional periods, repel him; and also a state of marked social inequality of the sexes; nor can he whose business is to address the mind be understood where there is not a moderate degree of intellectual activity.

Moreover, to touch and kindle the mind through laughter, demands more than sprightliness, a most subtle delicacy. That must be a natal gift in the Comic poet. The substance he deals with will show him a startling exhibition of the dyer's hand, if he is without it. People are ready to surrender themselves to witty thumps on the back, breast, and sides; all except the

[1] A lecture delivered at the London Institution, February 1, 1877.

head : and it is there that he aims. He must be subtle to penetrate. A corresponding acuteness must exist to welcome him. The necessity for the two conditions will explain how it is that we count him during centuries in the singular number.

'C'est une étrange entreprise que celle de faire rire les honnêtes gens,' Molière says ; and the difficulty of the undertaking cannot be over-estimated.

Then again, he is beset with foes to right and left, of a character unknown to the tragic and the lyric poet, or even to philosophers.

We have in this world men whom Rabelais would call agelasts ; that is to say, non-laughers ; men who are in that respect as dead bodies, which if you prick them do not bleed. The old grey boulder-stone that has finished its peregrination from the rock to the valley, is as easily to be set rolling up again as these men laughing. No collision of circumstances in our mortal career strikes a light for them. It is but one step from being agelastic to misogelastic, and the μισόγελως, the laughter-hating, soon learns to dignify his dislike as an objection in morality.

We have another class of men, who are pleased to consider themselves antagonists of the foregoing, and whom we may term hypergelasts ; the excessive laughers, ever-laughing, who are as clappers of a bell, that may be rung by a breeze, a grimace ; who are so loosely put together that a wink will shake them.

'. . . c'est n'estimer rien qu'estimer tout le monde,'

and to laugh at everything is to have no appreciation of the Comic of Comedy.

Neither of these distinct divisions of non-laughers and over-laughers would be entertained by reading The Rape of the Lock, or seeing a performance of Le Tartuffe. In relation to the stage, they have taken in our land the

form and title of Puritan and Bacchanalian. For though the stage is no longer a public offender, and Shakespeare has been revived on it, to give it nobility, we have not yet entirely raised it above the contention of these two parties. Our speaking on the theme of Comedy will appear almost a libertine proceeding to one, while the other will think that the speaking of it seriously brings us into violent contrast with the subject.

Comedy, we have to admit, was never one of the most honoured of the Muses. She was in her origin, short of slaughter, the loudest expression of the little civilization of men. The light of Athene over the head of Achilles illuminates the birth of Greek Tragedy. But Comedy rolled in shouting under the divine protection of the Son of the Wine-jar, as Dionysus is made to proclaim himself by Aristophanes. Our second Charles was the patron, of like benignity, of our Comedy of Manners, which began similarly as a combative performance, under a licence to deride and outrage the Puritan, and was here and there Bacchanalian beyond the Aristophanic example: worse, inasmuch as a cynical licentiousness is more abominable than frank filth. An eminent Frenchman judges from the quality of some of the stuff dredged up for the laughter of men and women who sat through an Athenian Comic play, that they could have had small delicacy in other affairs when they had so little in their choice of entertainment. Perhaps he does not make sufficient allowance for the regulated licence of plain speaking proper to the festival of the god, and claimed by the Comic poet as his inalienable right, or for the fact that it was a festival in a season of licence, in a city accustomed to give ear to the boldest utterance of both sides of a case. However that may be, there can be no question that the men and women who sat through the acting of Wycherley's Country Wife were past

blushing. Our tenacity of national impressions has caused the word theatre since then to prod the Puritan nervous system like a satanic instrument; just as one has known Anti-Papists, for whom Smithfield was redolent of a sinister smoke, as though they had a later recollection of the place than the lowing herds. Hereditary Puritanism, regarding the stage, is met, to this day, in many families quite undistinguished by arrogant piety. It has subsided altogether as a power in the profession of morality; but it is an error to suppose it extinct, and unjust also to forget that it had once good reason to hate, shun, and rebuke our public shows.

We shall find ourselves about where the Comic spirit would place us, if we stand at middle distance between the inveterate opponents and the drum-and-fife supporters of Comedy: 'Comme un point fixe fait remarquer l'emportement des autres,' as Pascal says. And were there more in this position, Comic genius would flourish.

Our English idea of a Comedy of Manners might be imaged in the person of a blowsy country girl—say Hoyden, the daughter of Sir Tunbelly Clumsy, who, when at home, 'never disobeyed her father except in the eating of green gooseberries'—transforming to a varnished City madam; with a loud laugh and a mincing step; the crazy ancestress of an accountably fallen descendant. She bustles prodigiously and is punctually smart in her speech, always in a fluster to escape from Dulness, as they say the dogs on the Nile-banks drink at the river running to avoid the crocodile. If the monster catches her, as at times he does, she whips him to a froth, so that those who know Dulness only as a thing of ponderousness, shall fail to recognise him in that light and airy shape.

When she has frolicked through her five Acts to surprise you with the information that Mr. Aimwell is converted by a sudden death in the world outside the scenes into Lord Aimwell, and can marry the lady in the light of day, it is to the credit of her vivacious nature that she does not anticipate your calling her Farce. Five is dignity with a trailing robe; whereas one, two, or three Acts would be short skirts, and degrading. Advice has been given to householders, that they should follow up the shot at a burglar in the dark by hurling the pistol after it, so that if the bullet misses, the weapon may strike and assure the rascal he has it. The point of her wit is in this fashion supplemented by the rattle of her tongue, and effectively, according to the testimony of her admirers. Her wit is at once, like steam in an engine, the motive force and the warning whistle of her headlong course; and it vanishes like the track of steam when she has reached her terminus, never troubling the brains afterwards; a merit that it shares with good wine, to the joy of the Bacchanalians. As to this wit, it is warlike. In the neatest hands it is like the sword of the cavalier in the Mall, quick to flash out upon slight provocation, and for a similar office—to wound. Commonly its attitude is entirely pugilistic; two blunt fists rallying and countering. When harmless, as when the word 'fool' occurs, or allusions to the state of husband, it has the sound of the smack of harlequin's wand upon clown, and is to the same extent exhilarating. Believe that idle empty laughter is the most desirable of recreations, and significant Comedy will seem pale and shallow in comparison. Our popular idea would be hit by the sculptured group of Laughter holding both his sides, while Comedy pummels, by way of tickling him. As to a meaning, she holds that it does not conduce to making merry: you might as well carry cannon on a

racing-yacht. Morality is a duenna to be circumvented. This was the view of English Comedy of a sagacious essayist, who said that the end of a Comedy would often be the commencement of a Tragedy, were the curtain to rise again on the performers. In those old days female modesty was protected by a fan, behind which, and it was of a convenient semicircular breadth, the ladies present in the theatre retired at a signal of decorum, to peep, covertly askant, or with the option of so peeping, through a prettily fringed eyelet-hole in the eclipsing arch.

'Ego limis specto sic per flabellum clanculum.'—TERENCE.

That fan is the flag and symbol of the society giving us our so-called Comedy of Manners, or Comedy of the manners of South-sea Islanders under city veneer; and as to Comic idea, vacuous as the mask without the face behind it.

Elia, whose humour delighted in floating a galleon paradox and wafting it as far as it would go, bewails the extinction of our artificial Comedy, like a poet sighing over the vanished splendour of Cleopatra's Nile-barge; and the sedateness of his plea for a cause condemned even in his time to the penitentiary, is a novel effect of the ludicrous. When the realism of those 'fictitious half-believed personages,' as he calls them, had ceased to strike, they were objectionable company, uncaressable as puppets. Their artifices are staringly naked, and have now the effect of a painted face viewed, after warm hours of dancing, in the morning light. How could the Lurewells and the Plyants ever have been praised for ingenuity in wickedness? Critics, apparently sober, and of high reputation, held up their shallow knaveries for the world to admire. These Lurewells, Plyants, Pinchwifes, Fondlewifes, Miss Prue, Peggy,

Hoyden, all of them save charming Millamant, are dead as last year's clothes in a fashionable fine lady's wardrobe, and it must be an exceptionably abandoned Abigail of our period that would look on them with the wish to appear in their likeness. Whether the puppet show of Punch and Judy inspires our street-urchins to have instant recourse to their fists in a dispute, after the fashion of every one of the actors in that public entertainment who gets possession of the cudgel, is open to question: it has been hinted; and angry moralists have traced the national taste for tales of crime to the smell of blood in our nursery-songs. It will at any rate hardly be questioned that it is unwholesome for men and women to see themselves as they are, if they are no better than they should be: and they will not, when they have improved in manners, care much to see themselves as they once were. That comes of realism in the Comic art; and it is not public caprice, but the consequence of a bettering state.[1] The same of an immoral may be said of realistic exhibitions of a vulgar society.

The French make a critical distinction in *ce qui remue* from *ce qui émeut*—that which agitates from that which touches with emotion. In the realistic comedy it is an incessant *remuage*—no calm, merely bustling figures, and no thought. Excepting Congreve's Way of the World, which failed on the stage, there was nothing to keep our comedy alive on its merits; neither, with all its realism, true protraiture, nor much quotable fun, nor idea; neither salt nor soul.

The French have a school of stately comedy to which they can fly for renovation whenever they have fallen away from it; and their having such a school is mainly

[1] Realism in the writing is carried to such a pitch in 'The Old Bachelor,' that husband and wife use imbecile connubial epithets to one another.

the reason why, as John Stuart Mill pointed out, they know men and women more accurately than we do. Molière followed the Horatian precept, to observe the manners of his age and give his characters the colour befitting them at the time. He did not paint in raw realism. He seized his characters firmly for the central purpose of the play, stamped them in the idea, and by slightly raising and softening the object of study (as in the case of the ex-Huguenot, Duke de Montausier,[1] for the study of the Misanthrope, and, according to St. Simon, the Abbe Roquette for Tartuffe), generalized upon it so as to make it permanently human. Concede that it is natural for human creatures to live in society, and Alceste is an imperishable mark of one, though he is drawn in light outline, without any forcible human colouring. Our English school has not clearly imagined society; and of the mind hovering above congregated men and women, it has imagined nothing. The critics who praise it for its downrightness, and for bringing the situations home to us, as they admiringly say, cannot but disapprove of Molière's comedy, which appeals to the individual mind to perceive and participate in the social. We have splendid tragedies, we have the most beautiful of poetic plays, and we have literary comedies passingly pleasant to read, and occasionally to see acted. By literary comedies, I mean comedies of classic inspiration, drawn chiefly from Menander and the Greek New Comedy through Terence; or else comedies of the poet's personal conception, that have had no model in life, and are humorous exaggerations, happy or otherwise. These are the Comedies of Ben Jonson, Massinger, and Fletcher. Massinger's Justice Greedy we can all of us refer to a type, 'with fat capon lined' that has been and

[1] Tallemant des Réaux, in his rough portrait of the Duke, shows the foundation of the character of Alceste.

will be; and he would be comic, as Panurge is comic, but only a Rabelais could set him moving with real animation. Probably Justice Greedy would be comic to the audience of a country booth and to some of our friends. If we have lost our youthful relish for the presentation of characters put together to fit a type, we find it hard to put together the mechanism of a civil smile at his enumeration of his dishes. Something of the same is to be said of Bobadil, swearing 'by the foot of Pharaoh'; with a reservation, for he is made to move faster, and to act. The comic of Jonson is a scholar's excogitation of the comic; that of Massinger a moralist's.

Shakespeare is a well-spring of characters which are saturated with the comic spirit; with more of what we will call blood-life than is to be found anywhere out of Shakespeare; and they are of this world, but they are of the world enlarged to our embrace by imagination, and by great poetic imagination. They are, as it were —I put it to suit my present comparison—creatures of the woods and wilds, not in walled towns, not grouped and toned to pursue a comic exhibition of the narrower world of society. Jaques, Falstaff and his regiment, the varied troop of Clowns, Malvolio, Sir Hugh Evans and Fluellen — marvellous Welshmen! — Benedict and Beatrice, Dogberry, and the rest, are subjects of a special study in the poetically comic.

His comedy of incredible imbroglio belongs to the literary section. One may conceive that there was a natural resemblance between him and Menander, both in the scheme and style of his lighter plays. Had Shakespeare lived in a later and less emotional, less heroical period of our history, he might have turned to the painting of manners as well as humanity. Euripides would probably, in the time of Menander, when Athens was enslaved but prosperous, have lent

his hand to the composition of romantic comedy. He certainly inspired that fine genius.

Politically it is accounted a misfortune for France that her nobles thronged to the Court of Louis Quatorze. It was a boon to the comic poet. He had that lively quicksilver world of the animalcule passions, the huge pretensions, the placid absurdities, under his eyes in full activity; vociferous quacks and snapping dupes, hypocrites, posturers, extravagants, pedants, rose-pink ladies and mad grammarians, sonneteering marquises, high-flying mistresses, plain-minded maids, interthreading as in a loom, noisy as at a fair. A simply bourgeois circle will not furnish it, for the middle class must have the brilliant, flippant, independent upper for a spur and a pattern; otherwise it is likely to be inwardly dull as well as outwardly correct. Yet, though the King was benevolent toward Molière, it is not to the French Court that we are indebted for his unrivalled studies of mankind in society. For the amusement of the Court the ballets and farces were written, which are dearer to the rabble upper, as to the rabble lower, class than intellectual comedy. The French bourgeoisie of Paris were sufficiently quick-witted and enlightened by education to welcome great works like Le Tartuffe, Les Femmes Savantes, and Le Misanthrope, works that were perilous ventures on the popular intelligence, big vessels to launch on streams running to shallows. The Tartuffe hove into view as an enemy's vessel; it offended, not *Dieu mais les dévots*, as the Prince de Condé explained the cabal raised against it to the King.

The Femmes Savantes is a capital instance of the uses of comedy in teaching the world to understand what ails it. The farce of the Précieuses ridiculed and put a stop to the monstrous romantic jargon made popular by certain famous novels. The comedy of the Femmes

Savantes exposed the later and less apparent but more finely comic absurdity of an excessive purism in grammar and diction, and the tendency to be idiotic in precision. The French had felt the burden of this new nonsense; but they had to see the comedy several times before they were consoled in their suffering by seeing the cause of it exposed.

The Misanthrope was yet more frigidly received. Molière thought it dead. 'I cannot improve on it, and assuredly never shall,' he said. It is one of the French titles to honour that this quintessential comedy of the opposition of Alceste and Célimène was ultimately understood and applauded. In all countries the middle class presents the public which, fighting the world, and with a good footing in the fight, knows the world best. It may be the most selfish, but that is a question leading us into sophistries. Cultivated men and women, who do not skim the cream of life, and are attached to the duties, yet escape the harsher blows, make acute and balanced observers. Molière is their poet.

Of this class in England, a large body, neither Puritan nor Bacchanalian, have a sentimental objection to face the study of the actual world. They take up disdain of it, when its truths appear humiliating: when the facts are not immediately forced on them, they take up the pride of incredulity. They live in a hazy atmosphere that they suppose an ideal one. Humorous writing they will endure, perhaps approve, if it mingles with pathos to shake and elevate the feelings. They approve of Satire, because, like the beak of the vulture, it smells of carrion, which they are not. But of Comedy they have a shivering dread, for Comedy enfolds them with the wretched host of the world, huddles them with us all in an ignoble assimilation, and cannot be used by any exalted variety as a scourge and a broom. Nay, to be

an exalted variety is to come under the calm curious eye of the Comic spirit, and be probed for what you are. Men are seen among them, and very many cultivated women. You may distinguish them by a favourite phrase: 'Surely we are not so bad!' and the remark: 'If that is human nature, save us from it!' as if it could be done: but in the peculiar Paradise of the wilful people who will not see, the exclamation assumes the saving grace.

Yet should you ask them whether they dislike sound sense, they vow they do not. And question cultivated women whether it pleases them to be shown moving on an intellectual level with men, they will answer that it does; numbers of them claim the situation. Now, Comedy is the fountain of sound sense, not the less perfectly sound on account of the sparkle: and Comedy lifts women to a station offering them free play for their wit, as they usually show it, when they have it, on the side of sound sense. The higher the Comedy, the more prominent the part they enjoy in it. Dorine in the Tartuffe is common-sense incarnate, though palpably a waiting-maid. Célimène is undisputed mistress of the same attribute in the Misanthrope; wiser as a woman than Alceste as man. In Congreve's Way of the World, Millamant overshadows Mirabel, the sprightliest male figure of English comedy.

But those two ravishing women, so copious and so choice of speech, who fence with men and pass their guard, are heartless! Is it not preferable to be the pretty idiot, the passive beauty, the adorable bundle of caprices, very feminine, very sympathetic, of romantic and sentimental fiction? Our women are taught to think so. The Agnès of the École des Femmes should be a lesson for men. The heroines of Comedy are like women of the world, not necessarily heartless from

being clear-sighted: they seem so to the sentimentally-reared only for the reason that they use their wits, and are not wandering vessels crying for a captain or a pilot. Comedy is an exhibition of their battle with men, and that of men with them: and as the two, however divergent, both look on one object, namely, Life, the gradual similarity of their impressions must bring them to some resemblance. The Comic poet dares to show us men and women coming to this mutual likeness; he is for saying that when they draw together in social life their minds grow liker; just as the philosopher discerns the similarity of boy and girl, until the girl is marched away to the nursery. Philosopher and Comic poet are of a cousinship in the eye they cast on life: and they are equally unpopular with our wilful English of the hazy region and the ideal that is not to be disturbed.

Thus, for want of instruction in the Comic idea, we lose a large audience among our cultivated middle class that we should expect to support Comedy. The sentimentalist is as averse as the Puritan and as the Bacchanalian.

Our traditions are unfortunate. The public taste is with the idle laughers, and still inclines to follow them. It may be shown by an analysis of Wycherley's Plain Dealer, a coarse prose adaptation of the Misanthrope, stuffed with lumps of realism in a vulgarized theme to hit the mark of English appetite, that we have in it the keynote of the Comedy of our stage. It is Molière travestied, with the hoof to his foot and hair on the pointed tip of his ear. And how difficult it is for writers to disentangle themselves from bad traditions is noticeable when we find Goldsmith, who had grave command of the comic in narrative, producing an elegant farce for a comedy; and Fielding, who was a master of the comic both in narrative and in dialogue, not even approaching to the presentable in farce.

These bad traditions of Comedy affect us not only on the stage, but in our literature, and may be tracked into our social life. They are the ground of the heavy moralizings by which we are outwearied, about Life as a Comedy, and Comedy as a jade,[1] when popular writers, conscious of fatigue in creativeness, desire to be cogent in a modish cynicism : perversions of the idea of life, and of the proper esteem for the society we have wrested from brutishness, and would carry higher. Stock images of this description are accepted by the timid and the sensitive, as well as by the saturnine, quite seriously ; for not many look abroad with their own eyes, fewer still have the habit of thinking for themselves. Life, we know too well, is not a Comedy, but something strangely mixed ; nor is Comedy a vile mask. The corrupted importation from France was noxious ; a noble entertainment spoilt to suit the wretched taste of a villanous age ; and the later imitations of it, partly drained of its poison and made decorous, became tiresome, notwithstanding their fun, in the perpetual recurring of the same situations, owing to the absence of original study and vigour of conception. Scene v. Act 2 of the Misanthrope, owing, no doubt, to the fact of our not producing matter for original study, is repeated in succession by Wycherley, Congreve, and Sheridan, and as it is at second hand, we have it done cynically—or such is the tone ; in the manner of ' below stairs.' Comedy thus treated may be accepted as a version of the ordinary worldly understanding of our social life ; at least, in accord with the current dicta concerning it. The epigrams can be made ; but it is uninstructive, rather tending to do disservice. Comedy

[1] See Tom Jones, book viii. chapter 1, for Fielding's opinion of our Comedy. But he puts it simply ; not as an exercise in the quasi-philosophical bathetic.

justly treated, as you find it in Molière, whom we so clownishly mishandled, the Comedy of Molière throws no infamous reflection upon life. It is deeply conceived, in the first place, and therefore it cannot be impure. Meditate on that statement. Never did man wield so shrieking a scourge upon vice, but his consummate self-mastery is not shaken while administering it. Tartuffe and Harpagon, in fact, are made each to whip himself and his class, the false pietists, and the insanely covetous. Molière has only set them in motion. He strips Folly to the skin, displays the imposture of the creature, and is content to offer her better clothing, with the lesson Chrysale reads to Philaminte and Bélise. He conceives purely, and he writes purely, in the simplest language, the simplest of French verse. The source of his wit is clear reason: it is a fountain of that soil and it springs to vindicate reason, common-sense, rightness and justice; for no vain purpose ever. The wit is of such pervading spirit that it inspires a pun with meaning and interest.[1] His moral does not hang like a tail, or preach from one character incessantly cocking an eye at the audience, as in recent realistic French Plays, but is in the heart of his work, throbbing with every pulsation of an organic structure. If Life is likened to the comedy of Molière, there is no scandal in the comparison.

Congreve's Way of the World is an exception to our other comedies, his own among them, by virtue of the remarkable brilliancy of the writing, and the figure o Millamant. The comedy has no idea in it, beyond the stale one, that so the world goes; and it concludes with the jaded discovery of a document at a convenient season for the descent of the curtain. A plot was an

[1] Femmes Savantes:—

BÉLISE: Veux-tu toute ta vie offenser la grammaire
MARTINE: Qui parle d'offenser grand'mère ni grand-père?

The pun is delivered in all sincerity, from the mouth of a rustic.

afterthought with Congreve. By the help of a wooden villain (Maskwell) marked Gallows to the flattest eye, he gets a sort of plot in The Double Dealer.[1] His Way of the World might be called The Conquest of a Town Coquette, and Millamant is a perfect portrait of a coquette, both in her resistance to Mirabel and the manner of her surrender, and also in her tongue. The wit here is not so salient as in certain passages of Love for Love, where Valentine feigns madness or retorts on his father, or Mrs. Frail rejoices in the harmlessness of wounds to a woman's virtue, if she 'keeps them from air.' In The Way of the World, it appears less prepared in the smartness, and is more diffused in the more characteristic style of the speakers. Here, however, as elsewhere, his famous wit is like a bully-fencer, not ashamed to lay traps for its exhibition, transparently petulant for the train between certain ordinary words and the powder-magazine of the improprieties to be fired. Contrast the wit of Congreve with Molière's. That of the first is a Toledo blade, sharp, and wonderfully supple for steel; cast for duelling, restless in the scabbard, being so pretty when out of it. To shine, it must have an adversary. Molière's wit is like a running brook, with innumerable fresh lights on it at every turn of the wood through which its business is to find a way. It does not run in search of obstructions, to be noisy over them; but when dead leaves and viler substances are heaped along the course, its natural song is heightened. Without effort, and with no dazzling flashes of achievement, it is full of healing, the wit of good breeding, the wit of wisdom.

[1] Maskwell seems to have been carved on the model of Iago, as by the hand of an enterprising urchin. He apostrophizes his 'invention' repeatedly. 'Thanks, my invention.' He hits on an invention, to say: 'Was it my brain or Providence? no matter which.' It is no matter which, but it was not his brain.

'Genuine humour and true wit,' says Landor,[1] 'require a sound and capacious mind, which is always a grave one. Rabelais and La Fontaine are recorded by their countrymen to have been *rêveurs*. Few men have been graver than Pascal. Few men have been wittier.'

To apply the citation of so great a brain as Pascal's to our countryman would be unfair. Congreve had a certain soundness of mind; of capacity, in the sense intended by Landor, he had little. Judging him by his wit, he performed some happy thrusts, and taking it for genuine, it is a surface wit, neither rising from a depth nor flowing from a spring.

'On voit qu'il se travaille à dire de bons mots.'

He drives the poor hack word, 'fool,' as cruelly to the market for wit as any of his competitors. Here is an example, that has been held up for eulogy:

WITWOUD: He has brought me a letter from the fool my brother, etc., etc.

MIRABEL: A fool, and your brother, Witwoud?

WITWOUD: Ay, ay, my half-brother. My half-brother he is; no nearer, upon my honour.

MIRABEL: Then 'tis possible he may be but half a fool.

By evident preparation. This is a sort of wit one remembers to have heard at school, of a brilliant outsider; perhaps to have been guilty of oneself, a trifle later. It was, no doubt, a blaze of intellectual fireworks to the bumpkin squire, who came to London to go to the theatre and learn manners.

Where Congreve excels all his English rivals is in his literary force, and a succinctness of style peculiar to him. He had correct judgement, a correct ear, readiness of illustration within a narrow range, in snapshots

[1] Imaginary Conversations: Alfieri and the Jew Salomon.

of the obvious at the obvious, and copious language. He hits the mean of a fine style and a natural in dialogue. He is at once precise and voluble. If you have ever thought upon style you will acknowledge it to be a signal accomplishment. In this he is a classic, and is worthy of treading a measure with Molière. The Way of the World may be read out currently at a first glance, so sure are the accents of the emphatic meaning to strike the eye, perforce of the crispness and cunning polish of the sentences. You have not to look over them before you confide yourself to him; he will carry you safe. Sheridan imitated, but was far from surpassing him. The flow of boudoir Billingsgate in Lady Wishfort is unmatched for the vigour and pointedness of the tongue. It spins along with a final ring, like the voice of Nature in a fury, and is, indeed, racy eloquence of the elevated fishwife.

Millamant is an admirable, almost a lovable heroine. It is a piece of genius in a writer to make a woman's manner of speech portray her. You feel sensible of her presence in every line of her speaking. The stipulations with her lover in view of marriage, her fine lady's delicacy, and fine lady's easy evasions of indelicacy, coquettish airs, and playing with irresolution, which in a common maid would be bashfulness, until she submits to 'dwindle into a wife,' as she says, form a picture that lives in the frame, and is in harmony with Mirabel's description of her:

'Here she comes, i' faith, full sail, with her fan spread, and her streamers out, and a shoal of fools for tenders.'

And, after an interview:

'Think of you! To think of a whirlwind, though 'twere in a whirlwind, were a case of more steady contemplation, a very tranquillity of mind and mansion.'

There is a picturesqueness, as of Millamant and no

other, in her voice, when she is encouraged to take Mirabel by Mrs. Fainall, who is 'sure she has a mind to him':

MILLAMANT: Are you? I think I have—and the horrid man looks as if he thought so too, etc., etc.

One hears the tones, and sees the sketch and colour of the whole scene in reading it.

Célimène is behind Millamant in vividness. An air of bewitching whimsicality hovers over the graces of this Comic heroine, like the lively conversational play of a beautiful mouth.

But in wit she is no rival of Célimène. What she utters adds to her personal witchery, and is not further memorable. She is a flashing portrait, and a type of the superior ladies who do not think, not of those who do. In representing a class, therefore, it is a lower class, in the proportion that one of Gainsborough's full-length aristocratic women is below the permanent impressiveness of a fair Venetian head.

Millamant side by side with Célimène is an example of how far the realistic painting of a character can be carried to win our favour; and of where it falls short. Célimène is a woman's mind in movement, armed with an ungovernable wit; with perspicacious clear eyes for the world, and a very distinct knowledge that she belongs to the world, and is most at home in it. She is attracted to Alceste by her esteem for his honesty; she cannot avoid seeing where the good sense of the man is diseased.

Rousseau, in his letter to D'Alembert on the subject of the Misanthrope, discusses the character of Alceste, as though Molière had put him forth for an absolute example of misanthropy; whereas Alceste is only a misanthrope of the circle he finds himself placed in: he has a touching faith in the virtue residing in the country, and a critical love of sweet simpleness. Nor is he the

principal person of the comedy to which he gives a name. He is only passively comic. Célimène is the active spirit. While he is denouncing and railing, the trial is imposed upon her to make the best of him, and control herself, as much as a witty woman, eagerly courted, can do. By appreciating him she practically confesses her faultiness, and she is better disposed to meet him half way than he is to bend an inch: only she is *une âme de vingt ans*, the world is pleasant, and if the gilded flies of the Court are silly, uncompromising fanatics have their ridiculous features as well. Can she abandon the life they make agreeable to her, for a man who will not be guided by the common sense of his class; and who insists on plunging into one extreme—equal to suicide in her eyes—to avoid another? That is the comic question of the Misanthrope. Why will he not continue to mix with the world smoothly, appeased by the flattery of her secret and really sincere preference of him, and taking his revenge in satire of it, as she does from her own not very lofty standard, and will by and by do from his more exalted one?

Célimène is worldliness: Alceste is unworldliness. It does not quite imply unselfishness; and that is perceived by her shrewd head. Still he is a very uncommon figure in her circle, and she esteems him, *l'homme aux rubans verts*, 'who sometimes diverts but more often horribly vexes her,' as she can say of him when her satirical tongue is on the run. Unhappily the soul of truth in him, which wins her esteem, refuses to be tamed, or silent, or unsuspicious, and is the perpetual obstacle to their good accord. He is that melancholy person, the critic of everybody save himself; intensely sensitive to the faults of others, wounded by them; in love with his own indubitable honesty, and with his ideal of the simpler form of life befitting it: qualities which constitute the

satirist. He is a Jean Jacques of the Court. His proposal to Célimène when he pardons her, that she should follow him in flying humankind, and his frenzy of detestation of her at her refusal, are thoroughly in the mood of Jean Jacques. He is an impracticable creature of a priceless virtue; but Célimène may feel that to fly with him to the desert: that is, from the Court to the country

'Où d'être homme d'honneur on ait la liberté,'

she is likely to find herself the companion of a starving satirist, like that poor princess who ran away with the waiting-man, and when both were hungry in the forest, was ordered to give him flesh. She is a *fieffée* coquette, rejoicing in her wit and her attractions, and distinguished by her inclination for Alceste in the midst of her many other lovers; only she finds it hard to cut them off—what woman with a train does not?—and when the exposure of her naughty wit has laid her under their rebuke, she will do the utmost she can: she will give her hand to honesty, but she cannot quite abandon worldliness. She would be unwise if she did.

The fable is thin. Our pungent contrivers of plots would see no indication of life in the outlines. The life of the comedy is in the idea. As with the singing of the skylark out of sight, you must love the bird to be attentive to the song, so in this highest flight of the Comic Muse, you must love pure Comedy warmly to understand the Misanthrope: you must be receptive of the idea of Comedy. And to love Comedy you must know the real world, and know men and women well enough not to expect too much of them, though you may still hope for good.

Menander wrote a comedy called Misogynes, said to have been the most celebrated of his works. This misogynist is a married man, according to the fragment

surviving, and is a hater of women through hatred of his wife. He generalizes upon them from the example of this lamentable adjunct of his fortunes, and seems to have got the worst of it in the contest with her, which is like the issue in reality, in the polite world. He seems also to have deserved it, which may be as true to the copy. But we are unable to say whether the wife was a good voice of her sex : or how far Menander in this instance raised the idea of woman from the mire it was plunged into by the comic poets, or rather satiric dramatists, of the middle period of Greek Comedy preceding him and the New Comedy, who devoted their wit chiefly to the abuse, and for a diversity, to the eulogy of extra-mural ladies of conspicuous fame. Menander idealized them without purposely elevating. He satirized a certain Thais, and his Thais of the Eunuchus of Terence is neither professionally attractive nor repulsive ; his picture of the two Andrians, Chrysis and her sister, is nowhere to be matched for tenderness. But the condition of honest women in his day did not permit of the freedom of action and fencing dialectic of a Célimène, and consequently it is below our mark of pure Comedy.

Sainte-Beuve conjures up the ghost of Menander, saying : For the love of me love Terence. It is through love of Terence that moderns are able to love Menander ; and what is preserved of Terence has not apparently given us the best of the friend of Epicurus. *Μισούμενος* the lover taken in horror, and *Περικειρομένη* the damsel shorn of her locks, have a promising sound for scenes of jealousy and a too masterful display of lordly authority, leading to regrets, of the kind known to intemperate men who imagined they were fighting with the weaker, as the fragments indicate.

Of the six comedies of Terence, four are derived from Menander ; two, the Hecyra and the Phormio,

from Apollodorus. These two are inferior in comic action and the peculiar sweetness of Menander to the Andria, the Adelphi, the Heautontimorumenus, and the Eunuchus: but Phormio is a more dashing and amusing convivial parasite than the Gnatho of the last-named comedy. There were numerous rivals of whom we know next to nothing—except by the quotations of Athenæus and Plutarch, and the Greek grammarians who cited them to support a dictum—in this as in the preceding periods of comedy in Athens, for Menander's plays are counted by many scores, and they were crowned by the prize only eight times. The favourite poet with critics, in Greece as in Rome, was Menander; and if some of his rivals here and there surpassed him in comic force, and outstripped him in competition by an appositeness to the occasion that had previously in the same way deprived the genius of Aristophanes of its due reward in Clouds and Birds, his position as chief of the comic poets of his age was unchallenged. Plutarch very unnecessarily drags Aristophanes into a comparison with him, to the confusion of the older poet. Their aims, the matter they dealt in, and the times, were quite dissimilar. But it is no wonder that Plutarch, writing when Athenian beauty of style was the delight of his patrons, should rank Menander at the highest. In what degree of faithfulness Terence copied Menander, whether, as he states of the passage in the Adelphi taken from Diphilus, *verbum de verbo* in the lovelier scenes—the description of the last words of the dying Andrian, and of her funeral, for instance—remains conjectural. For us Terence shares with his master the praise of an amenity that is like Elysian speech, equable and ever gracious; like the face of the Andrian's young sister:

'Adeo modesto, adeo venusto, ut nihil supra.'

The celebrated 'flens quam familiariter,' of which the closest rendering grounds hopelessly on harsh prose, to express the sorrowful confidingness of a young girl who has lost her sister and dearest friend, and has but her lover left to her; 'she turned and flung herself on his bosom, weeping as though at home there': this our instinct tells us must be Greek, though hardly finer in Greek. Certain lines of Terence, compared with the original fragments, show that he embellished them; but his taste was too exquisite for him to do other than devote his genius to the honest translation of such pieces as the above. Menander, then; with him, through the affinity of sympathy, Terence; and Shakespeare and Molière have this beautiful translucency of language: and the study of the comic poets might be recommended, if for that only.

A singular ill fate befell the writings of Menander. What we have of him in Terence was chosen probably to please the cultivated Romans;[1] and is a romantic play with a comic intrigue, obtained in two instances, the Andria and the Eunuchus, by rolling a couple of his originals into one. The titles of certain of the lost plays indicate the comic illumining character; a Self-pitier, a Self-chastiser, an Ill-tempered man, a Superstitious, an Incredulous, etc., point to suggestive domestic themes. Terence forwarded manuscript translations from Greece, that suffered shipwreck; he, who could have restored the treasure, died on the way home. The zealots of Byzantium completed the work of destruction. So we have the four comedies of Terence, numbering six of Menander, with a few sketches of plots—one of them, the Thesaurus, introduces a miser, whom we should have

[1] Terence did not please the rough old conservative Romans: they liked Plautus better, and the recurring mention of the *vetus poeta* in his prologues, who plagued him with the crusty critical view of his productions, has in the end a comic effect on the reader.

liked to contrast with Harpagon—and a multitude of small fragments of a sententious cast, fitted for quotation. Enough remains to make his greatness felt.

Without undervaluing other writers of Comedy, I think it may be said that Menander and Molière stand alone specially as comic poets of the feelings and the idea. In each of them there is a conception of the Comic that refines even to pain, as in the Menedemus of the Heautontimorumenus, and in the Misanthrope. Menander and Molière have given the principal types to Comedy hitherto. The Micio and Demea of the Adelphi, with their opposing views of the proper management of youth, are still alive; the Sganarelles and Arnolphes of the École des Maris and the École des Femmes, are not all buried. Tartuffe is the father of the hypocrites; Orgon of the dupes; Thraso of the braggadocios; Alceste of the 'Manlys'; Davus and Syrus of the intriguing valets, the Scapins and Figaros. Ladies that soar in the realms of Rose-Pink, whose language wears the nodding plumes of intellectual conceit, are traceable to Philaminte and Bélise of the Femmes Savantes; and the mordant witty women have the tongue of Célimène. The reason is, that these two poets idealized upon life: the foundation of their types is real and in the quick, but they painted with spiritual strength, which is the solid in Art.

The idealistic conception of Comedy gives breadth and opportunities of daring to Comic genius, and helps to solve the difficulties it creates. How, for example, shall an audience be assured that an evident and monstrous dupe is actually deceived without being an absolute fool? In Le Tartuffe the note of high Comedy strikes when Orgon on his return home hears of his idol's excellent appetite. '*Le pauvre homme!*' he exclaims. He is told that the wife of his bosom has been unwell.

'*Et Tartuffe?*' he asks, impatient to hear him spoken of, his mind suffused with the thought of Tartuffe, crazy with tenderness, and again he croons, '*Le pauvre homme!*' It is the mother's cry of pitying delight at a nurse's recital of the feats in young animal gluttony of her cherished infant. After this masterstroke of the Comic, you not only put faith in Orgon's roseate prepossession, you share it with him by comic sympathy, and can listen with no more than a tremble of the laughing muscles to the instance he gives of the sublime humanity of Tartuffe :

> 'Un rien presque suffit pour le scandaliser,
> Jusque-la, qu'il se vint l'autre jour accuser
> D'avoir pris une puce en faisant sa prière,
> Et de l'avoir tuée avec trop de colère.'

Orgon, awakening to find another dupe in Madame Pernelle, incredulous of the revelations which have at last opened his own besotted eyes, is a scene of the double Comic, vivified by the spell previously cast on the mind. There we feel the power of the poet's creation ; and in the sharp light of that sudden turn the humanity is livelier than any realistic work can make it.

Italian Comedy gives many hints for a Tartuffe ; but they may be found in Boccaccio, as well as in Machiavelli's Mandragola. The Frate Timoteo of this piece is only a very oily friar, compliantly assisting an intrigue with ecclesiastical sophisms (to use the mildest word) for payment. Frate Timoteo has a fine Italian priestly pose.

Donna : *Credete voi, che'l Turco passi questo anno in Italia ?*

F. Tim. : *Se voi non fate orazione, si.*

Priestly arrogance and unctuousness, and trickeries and casuistries, cannot be painted without our dis-

covering a likeness in the long Italian gallery. Goldoni sketched the Venetian manners of the decadence of the Republic with a French pencil, and was an Italian Scribe in style.

The Spanish stage is richer in such Comedies as that which furnished the idea of the Menteur to Corneille. But you must force yourself to believe that this liar is not forcing his vein when he piles lie upon lie. There is no preceding touch to win the mind to credulity. Spanish Comedy is generally in sharp outline, as of skeletons; in quick movement, as of marionnettes. The Comedy might be performed by a troop of the *corps de ballet*; and in the recollection of the reading it resolves to an animated shuffle of feet. It is, in fact, something other than the true idea of Comedy. Where the sexes are separated, men and women grow, as the Portuguese call it, *affaimados* of one another, famine-stricken; and all the tragic elements are on the stage. Don Juan is a comic character that sends souls flying: nor does the humour of the breaking of a dozen women's hearts conciliate the Comic Muse with the drawing of blood.

German attempts at Comedy remind one vividly of Heine's image of his country in the dancing of Atta Troll. Lessing tried his hand at it, with a sobering effect upon readers. The intention to produce the reverse effect is just visible, and therein, like the portly graces of the poor old Pyrenean Bear poising and twirling on his right hind-leg and his left, consists the fun. Jean Paul Richter gives the best edition of the German Comic in the contrast of Siebenkäs with his Lenette. A light of the Comic is in Goethe; enough to complete the splendid figure of the man, but no more.

The German literary laugh, like the timed awakenings of their Barbarossa in the hollows of the Untersberg, is infrequent, and rather monstrous—never a laugh of

men and women in concert. It comes of unrefined abstract fancy, grotesque or grim, or gross, like the peculiar humours of their little earthmen. Spiritual laughter they have not yet attained to: sentimentalism waylays them in the flight. Here and there a Volkslied or Märchen shows a national aptitude for stout animal laughter; and we see that the literature is built on it, which is hopeful so far; but to enjoy it, to enter into the philosophy of the Broad Grin, that seems to hesitate between the skull and the embryo, and reaches its perfection in breadth from the pulling of two square fingers at the corners of the mouth, one must have aid of 'the good Rhine wine,' and be of German blood unmixed besides. This treble-Dutch lumbersomeness of the Comic spirit is of itself exclusive of the idea of Comedy, and the poor voice allowed to women in German domestic life will account for the absence of comic dialogues reflecting upon life in that land. I shall speak of it again in the second section of this lecture.

Eastward you have total silence of Comedy among a people intensely susceptible to laughter, as the Arabian Nights will testify. Where the veil is over women's faces, you cannot have society, without which the senses are barbarous and the Comic spirit is driven to the gutters of grossness to slake its thirst. Arabs in this respect are worse than Italians—much worse than Germans; just in the degree that their system of treating women is worse.

M. Saint-Marc Girardin, the excellent French essayist and master of critical style, tells of a conversation he had once with an Arab gentleman on the topic of the different management of these difficult creatures in Orient and in Occident: and the Arab spoke in praise of many good results of the greater freedom enjoyed by Western ladies, and the charm of conversing with them.

He was questioned why his countrymen took no measures to grant them something of that kind of liberty. He jumped out of his individuality in a twinkling, and entered into the sentiments of his race, replying, from the pinnacle of a splendid conceit, with affected humility of manner: '*You* can look on them without perturbation — but *we*!' . . . And after this profoundly comic interjection, he added, in deep tones, 'The very face of a woman!' Our representative of temperate notions demurely consented that the Arab's pride of inflammability should insist on the prudery of the veil as the civilizing medium of his race.

There has been fun in Bagdad. But there never will be civilization where Comedy is not possible; and that comes of some degree of social equality of the sexes. I am not quoting the Arab to exhort and disturb the somnolent East; rather for cultivated women to recognize that the Comic Muse is one of their best friends. They are blind to their interests in swelling the ranks of the sentimentalists. Let them look with their clearest vision abroad and at home. They will see that where they have no social freedom, Comedy is absent: where they are household drudges, the form of Comedy is primitive: where they are tolerably independent, but uncultivated, exciting melodrama takes its place and a sentimental version of them. Yet the Comic will out, as they would know if they listened to some of the private conversations of men whose minds are undirected by the Comic Muse: as the sentimental man, to his astonishment, would know likewise, if he in similar fashion could receive a lesson. But where women are on the road to an equal footing with men, in attainments and in liberty—in what they have won for themselves, and what has been granted them by a fair civilization—there, and only waiting to be transplanted from life to

the stage, or the novel, or the poem, pure Comedy flourishes, and is, as it would help them to be, the sweetest of diversions, the wisest of delightful companions.

Now, to look about us in the present time, I think it will be acknowledged that in neglecting the cultivation of the Comic idea, we are losing the aid of a powerful auxiliar. You see Folly perpetually sliding into new shapes in a society possessed of wealth and leisure, with many whims, many strange ailments and strange doctors. Plenty of common-sense is in the world to thrust her back when she pretends to empire. But the first-born of common-sense, the vigilant Comic, which is the genius of thoughtful laughter, which would readily extinguish her at the outset, is not serving as a public advocate.

You will have noticed the disposition of common-sense, under pressure of some pertinacious piece of light-headedness, to grow impatient and angry. That is a sign of the absence, or at least of the dormancy, of the Comic idea. For Folly is the natural prey of the Comic, known to it in all her transformations, in every disguise; and it is with the springing delight of hawk over heron, hound after fox, that it gives her chase, never fretting, never tiring, sure of having her, allowing her no rest.

Contempt is a sentiment that cannot be entertained by comic intelligence. What is it but an excuse to be idly minded, or personally lofty, or comfortably narrow, not perfectly humane? If we do not feign when we say that we despise Folly, we shut the brain. There is a disdainful attitude in the presence of Folly, partaking of the foolishness to Comic perception: and anger is not much less foolish than disdain. The struggle we have to conduct is essence against essence. Let no one doubt of the sequel when this emanation of what is

firmest in us is launched to strike down the daughter of Unreason and Sentimentalism: such being Folly's parentage, when it is respectable.

Our modern system of combating her is too long defensive, and carried on too ploddingly with concrete engines of war in the attack. She has time to get behind entrenchments. She is ready to stand a siege, before the heavily armed man of science and the writer of the leading article or elaborate essay have primed their big guns. It should be remembered that she has charms for the multitude; and an English multitude seeing her make a gallant fight of it will be half in love with her, certainly willing to lend her a cheer. Benevolent subscriptions assist her to hire her own man of science, her own organ in the Press. If ultimately she is cast out and overthrown, she can stretch a finger at gaps in our ranks. She can say that she commanded an army and seduced men, whom we thought sober men and safe, to act as her lieutenants. We learn rather gloomily, after she has flashed her lantern, that we have in our midst able men and men with minds for whom there is no pole-star in intellectual navigation. Comedy, or the Comic element, is the specific for the poison of delusion while Folly is passing from the state of vapour to substantial form.

O for a breath of Aristophanes, Rabelais, Voltaire, Cervantes, Fielding, Molière! These are spirits that, if you know them well, will come when you do call. You will find the very invocation of them act on you like a renovating air—the South-west coming off the sea, or a cry in the Alps.

No one would presume to say that we are deficient in jokers. They abound, and the organisation directing their machinery to shoot them in the wake of the leading article and the popular sentiment is good.

But the Comic differs from them in addressing the wits for laughter ; and the sluggish wits want some training to respond to it, whether in public life or private, and particularly when the feelings are excited.

The sense of the Comic is much blunted by habits of punning and of using humouristic phrase : the trick of employing Johnsonian polysyllables to treat of the infinitely little. And it really may be humorous, of a kind, yet it will miss the point by going too much round about it.

A certain French Duke Pasquier died, some years back, at a very advanced age. He had been the venerable Duke Pasquier in his later years up to the period of his death. There was a report of Duke Pasquier that he was a man of profound egoism. Hence an argument arose, and was warmly sustained, upon the excessive selfishness of those who, in a world of troubles, and calls to action, and innumerable duties, husband their strength for the sake of living on. Can it be possible, the argument ran, for a truly generous heart to continue beating up to the age of a hundred ? Duke Pasquier was not without his defenders, who likened him to the oak of the forest—a venerable comparison.

The argument was conducted on both sides with spirit and earnestness, lightened here and there by touches of the polysyllabic playful, reminding one of the serious pursuit of their fun by truant boys, that are assured they are out of the eye of their master, and now and then indulge in an imitation of him. And well might it be supposed that the Comic idea was asleep, not overlooking them ! It resolved at last to this, that either Duke Pasquier was a scandal on our humanity in clinging to life so long, or that he honoured it by so sturdy a resistance to the enemy. As one who has entangled himself in a labyrinth is glad to get out again at the

entrance, the argument ran about to conclude with its commencement.

Now, imagine a master of the Comic treating this theme, and particularly the argument on it. Imagine an Aristophanic comedy of THE CENTENARIAN, with choric praises of heroical early death, and the same of a stubborn vitality, and the poet laughing at the chorus ; and the grand question for contention in dialogue, as to the exact age when a man should die, to the identical minute, that he may preserve the respect of his fellows, followed by a systematic attempt to make an accurate measurement in parallel lines, with a tough rope-yarn by one party, and a string of yawns by the other, of the veteran's power of enduring life, and our capacity for enduring *him*, with tremendous pulling on both sides.

Would not the Comic view of the discussion illumine it and the disputants like very lightning ? There are questions, as well as persons, that only the Comic can fitly touch.

Aristophanes would probably have crowned the ancient tree, with the consolatory observation to the haggard line of long-expectant heirs of the Centenarian, that they live to see the blessedness of coming of a strong stock. The shafts of his ridicule would mainly have been aimed at the disputants. For the sole ground of the argument was the old man's character, and sophists are not needed to demonstrate that we can very soon have too much of a bad thing. A Centenarian does not necessarily provoke the Comic idea, nor does the corpse of a duke. It is not provoked in the order of nature, until we draw its penetrating attentiveness to some circumstance with which we have been mixing our private interests, or our speculative obfuscation. Dulness, insensible to the Comic, has the privilege of arousing it ; and the laying of a dull finger on matters of human

life is the surest method of establishing electrical communications with a battery of laughter—where the Comic idea is prevalent.

But if the Comic idea prevailed with us, and we had an Aristophanes to barb and wing it, we should be breathing air of Athens. Prosers now pouring forth on us like public fountains would be cut short in the street and left blinking, dumb as pillar-posts, with letters thrust into their mouths. We should throw off incubus, our dreadful familiar—by some called boredom—whom it is our present humiliation to be just alive enough to loathe, never quick enough to foil. There would be a bright and positive, clear Hellenic perception of facts. The vapours of Unreason and Sentimentalism would be blown away before they were productive. Where would Pessimist and Optimist be ? They would in any case have a diminished audience. Yet possibly the change of despots, from good-natured old obtuseness to keen-edged intelligence, which is by nature merciless, would be more than we could bear. The rupture of the link between dull people, consisting in the fraternal agreement that something is too clever for them, and a shot beyond them, is not to be thought of lightly ; for, slender though the link may seem, it is equivalent to a cement forming a concrete of dense cohesion, very desirable in the estimation of the statesman.

A political Aristophanes, taking advantage of his lyrical Bacchic licence, was found too much for political Athens. I would not ask to have him revived, but that the sharp light of such a spirit as his might be with us to strike now and then on public affairs, public themes, to make them spin along more briskly.

He hated with the politician's fervour the sophist who corrupted simplicity of thought, the poet who destroyed purity of style, the demagogue, 'the saw-toothed

monster,' who, as he conceived, chicaned the mob, and he held his own against them by strength of laughter, until fines, the curtailing of his Comic licence in the chorus, and ultimately the ruin of Athens, which could no longer support the expense of the chorus, threw him altogether on dialogue, and brought him under the law. After the catastrophe, the poet, who had ever been gazing back at the men of Marathon and Salamis, must have felt that he had foreseen it; and that he was wise when he pleaded for peace, and derided military coxcombry, and the captious old creature Demus, we can admit. He had the Comic poet's gift of common-sense —which does not always include political intelligence; yet his political tendency raised him above the Old Comedy turn for uproarious farce. He abused Socrates, but Xenophon, the disciple of Socrates, by his trained rhetoric saved the Ten Thousand. Aristophanes might say that if his warnings had been followed there would have been no such thing as a mercenary Greek expedition under Cyrus. Athens, however, was on a landslip, falling; none could arrest it. To gaze back, to uphold the old times, was a most natural conservatism, and fruitless. The aloe had bloomed. Whether right or wrong in his politics and his criticisms, and bearing in mind the instruments he played on and the audience he had to win, there is an idea in his comedies: it is the Idea of Good Citizenship.

He is not likely to be revived. He stands, like Shakespeare, an unapproachable. Swift says of him, with a loving chuckle:

> 'But as for Comic Aristophanes,
> The dog too witty and too prófane is.'

Aristophanes was 'prófane,' under satiric direction, unlike his rivals Cratinus, Phrynichus, Ameipsias,

Eupolis, and others, if we are to believe him, who in their extraordinary Donnybrook Fair of the day of Comedy, thumped one another and everybody else with absolute heartiness, as he did, but aimed at small game, and dragged forth particular women, which he did not. He is an aggregate of many men, all of a certain greatness. We may build up a conception of his powers if we mount Rabelais upon Hudibras, lift him with the songfulness of Shelley, give him a vein of Heinrich Heine, and cover him with the mantle of the Anti-Jacobin, adding (that there may be some Irish in him) a dash of Grattan, before he is in motion.

But such efforts at conceiving one great one by incorporation of minors are vain, and cry for excuse. Supposing Wilkes for leading man in a country constantly plunging into war under some plumed Lamachus, with enemies periodically firing the land up to the gates of London, and a Samuel Foote, of prodigious genius, attacking him with ridicule, I think it gives a notion of the conflict engaged in by Aristophanes. This laughing bald-pate, as he calls himself, was a Titanic pamphleteer, using laughter for his political weapon ; a laughter without scruple, the laughter of Hercules. He was primed with wit, as with the garlic he speaks of giving to the game-cocks, to make them fight the better. And he was a lyric poet of aërial delicacy, with the homely song of a jolly national poet, and a poet of such feeling that the comic mask is at times no broader than a cloth on a face to show the serious features of our common likeness. He is not to be revived ; but if his method were studied, some of the fire in him would come to us, and we might be revived.

Taking them generally, the English public are most in sympathy with this primitive Aristophanic comedy, wherein the comic is capped by the grotesque, irony

tips the wit, and satire is a naked sword. They have the basis of the comic in them : an esteem for common-sense. They cordially dislike the reverse of it. They have a rich laugh, though it is not the *gros rire* of the Gaul tossing *gros sel*, nor the polished Frenchman's mentally digestive laugh. And if they have now, like a monarch with a troop of dwarfs, too many jesters kicking the dictionary about, to let them reflect that they are dull, occasionally, like the pensive monarch surprizing himself with an idea of an idea of his own, they look so. And they are given to looking in the glass. They must see that something ails them. How much even the better order of them will endure, without a thought of the defensive, when the person afflicting them is protected from satire, we read in Memoirs of a Preceding Age, where the vulgarly tyrannous hostess of a great house of reception shuffled the guests and played them like a pack of cards, with her exact estimate of the strength of each one printed on them : and still this house continued to be the most popular in England ; nor did the lady ever appear in print or on the boards as the comic type that she was.

It has been suggested that they have not yet spiritually comprehended the signification of living in society ; for who are cheerfuller, brisker of wit, in the fields, and as explorers, colonizers, backwoodsmen ? They are happy in rough exercise, and also in complete repose. The intermediate condition, when they are called upon to talk to one another, upon other than affairs of business or their hobbies, reveals them wearing a curious look of vacancy, as it were the socket of an eye wanting. The Comic is perpetually springing up in social life, and it oppresses them from not being perceived.

Thus, at a dinner-party, one of the guests, who happens to have enrolled himself in a Burial Company, politely

entreats the others to inscribe their names as shareholders, expatiating on the advantages accruing to them in the event of their very possible speedy death, the salubrity of the site, the aptitude of the soil for a quick consumption of their remains, etc.; and they drink sadness from the incongruous man, and conceive indigestion, not seeing him in a sharply defined light, that would bid them taste the comic of him. Or it is mentioned that a newly elected member of our Parliament celebrates his arrival at eminence by the publication of a book on cab-fares, dedicated to a beloved female relative deceased, and the comment on it is the word 'Indeed.' But, merely for a contrast, turn to a not uncommon scene of yesterday in the hunting-field, where a brilliant young rider, having broken his collar-bone, trots away very soon after, against medical interdict, half put together in splinters, to the most distant meet of his neighbourhood, sure of escaping his doctor, who is the first person he encounters. 'I came here purposely to avoid you,' says the patient. 'I came here purposely to take care of you,' says the doctor. Off they go, and come to a swollen brook. The patient clears it handsomely: the doctor tumbles in. All the field are alive with the heartiest relish of every incident and every cross-light on it; and dull would the man have been thought who had not his word to say about it when riding home.

In our prose literature we have had delightful comic writers. Besides Fielding and Goldsmith, there is Miss Austen, whose Emma and Mr. Elton might walk straight into a comedy, were the plot arranged for them. Galt's neglected novels have some characters and strokes of shrewd comedy. In our poetic literature the comic is delicate and graceful above the touch of Italian and French. Generally, however, the English elect excel

in satire, and they are noble humourists. The national disposition is for hard-hitting, with a moral purpose to sanction it; or for a rosy, sometimes a larmoyant, geniality, not unmanly in its verging upon tenderness, and with a singular attraction for thick-headedness, to decorate it with asses' ears and the most beautiful sylvan haloes. But the Comic is a different spirit.

You may estimate your capacity for Comic perception by being able to detect the ridicule of them you love, without loving them less: and more by being able to see yourself somewhat ridiculous in dear eyes, and accepting the correction their image of you proposes.

Each one of an affectionate couple may be willing, as we say, to die for the other, yet unwilling to utter the agreeable word at the right moment; but if the wits were sufficiently quick for them to perceive that they are in a comic situation, as affectionate couples must be when they quarrel, they would not wait for the moon or the almanac, or a Dorine, to bring back the flood-tide of tender feelings, that they should join hands and lips.

If you detect the ridicule, and your kindliness is chilled by it, you are slipping into the grasp of Satire.

If instead of falling foul of the ridiculous person with a satiric rod, to make him writhe and shriek aloud, you prefer to sting him under a semi-caress, by which he shall in his anguish be rendered dubious whether indeed anything has hurt him, you are an engine of Irony.

If you laugh all round him, tumble him, roll him about, deal him a smack, and drop a tear on him, own his likeness to you and yours to your neighbour, spare him as little as you shun, pity him as much as you expose, it is a spirit of Humour that is moving you.

The Comic, which is the perceptive, is the governing spirit, awakening and giving aim to these powers of

laughter, but it is not to be confounded with them: it enfolds a thinner form of them, differing from satire, in not sharply driving into the quivering sensibilities, and from humour, in not comforting them and tucking them up, or indicating a broader than the range of this bustling world to them.

Fielding's Jonathan Wild presents a case of this peculiar distinction, when that man of eminent greatness remarks upon the unfairness of a trial in which the condemnation has been brought about by twelve men of the opposite party; for it is not satiric, it is not humorous; yet it is immensely comic to hear a guilty villain protesting that his own 'party' should have a voice in the Law. It opens an avenue into villains' ratiocination.[1] And the Comic is not cancelled though we should suppose Jonathan to be giving play to his humour.

Apply the case to the man of deep wit, who is ever certain of his condemnation by the opposite party, and then it ceases to be comic, and will be satiric.

The look of Fielding upon Richardson is essentially comic. His method of correcting the sentimental writer is a mixture of the comic and the humorous. Parson Adams is a creation of humour. But both the conception and the presentation of Alceste and of Tartuffe, of Célimène and Philaminte, are purely comic, addressed to the intellect: there is no humour in them, and they refresh the intellect they quicken to detect their comedy, by force of the contrast they offer between themselves and the wiser world about them; that is to say, society, or that assemblage of minds whereof the Comic spirit has its origin.

[1] The exclamation of Lady Booby, when Joseph defends himself: '*Your virtue!* I shall never survive it!' etc., is another instance.—Joseph Andrews. Also that of Miss Mathews in her narrative to Booth: 'But such are the friendships of women.'—Amelia.

Byron had splendid powers of humour, and the most poetic satire that we have example of, fusing at times to hard irony. He had no strong comic sense, or he would not have taken an anti-social position, which is directly opposed to the Comic; and in his philosophy, judged by philosophers, he is a comic figure, by reason of this deficiency. 'So bald er philosophirt ist er ein Kind,' Goethe says of him. Carlyle sees him in this comic light, treats him in the humorous manner.

The Satirist is a moral agent, often a social scavenger, working on a storage of bile.

The Ironeïst is one thing or another, according to his caprice. Irony is the humour of satire; it may be savage as in Swift, with a moral object, or sedate, as in Gibbon, with a malicious. The foppish irony fretting to be seen, and the irony which leers, that you shall not mistake its intention, are failures in satiric effort pretending to the treasures of ambiguity.

The Humourist of mean order is a refreshing laugher, giving tone to the feelings and sometimes allowing the feelings to be too much for him. But the humourist of high has an embrace of contrasts beyond the scope of the Comic poet.

Heart and mind laugh out at Don Quixote, and still you brood on him. The juxtaposition of the knight and squire is a Comic conception, the opposition of their natures most humorous. They are as different as the two hemispheres in the time of Columbus, yet they touch and are bound in one by laughter. The knight's great aims and constant mishaps, his chivalrous valiancy exercised on absurd objects, his good sense along the highroad of the craziest of expeditions; the compassion he plucks out of derision, and the admirable figure he preserves while stalking through the frantically grotesque and burlesque assailing him, are in the loftiest

moods of humour, fusing the Tragic sentiment with the Comic narrative.

The stroke of the great humourist is world-wide, with lights of Tragedy in his laughter.

Taking a living great, though not creative, humourist to guide our description: the skull of Yorick is in his hands in our seasons of festival; he sees visions of primitive man capering preposterously under the gorgeous robes of ceremonial. Our souls must be on fire when we wear solemnity, if we would not press upon his shrewdest nerve. Finite and infinite flash from one to the other with him, lending him a two-edged thought that peeps out of his peacefullest lines by fits, like the lantern of the fire-watcher at windows, going the rounds at night. The comportment and performances of men in society are to him, by the vivid comparison with their mortality, more grotesque than respectable. But ask yourself, Is he always to be relied on for justness? He will fly straight as the emissary eagle back to Jove at the true Hero. He will also make as determined a swift descent upon the man of his wilful choice, whom we cannot distinguish as a true one. This vast power of his, built up of the feelings and the intellect in union, is often wanting in proportion and in discretion. Humourists touching upon History or Society are given to be capricious. They are, as in the case of Sterne, given to be sentimental; for with them the feelings are primary, as with singers. Comedy, on the other hand, is an interpretation of the general mind, and is for that reason of necessity kept in restraint. The French lay marked stress on *mesure et goût*, and they own how much they owe to Molière for leading them in simple justness and taste. We can teach them many things; they can teach us in this.

The Comic poet is in the narrow field, or enclosed

square, of the society he depicts; and he addresses the still narrower enclosure of men's intellects, with reference to the operation of the social world upon their characters. He is not concerned with beginnings or endings or surroundings, but with what you are now weaving. To understand his work and value it, you must have a sober liking of your kind and a sober estimate of our civilized qualities. The aim and business of the Comic poet are misunderstood, his meaning is not seized nor his point of view taken, when he is accused of dishonouring our nature and being hostile to sentiment, tending to spitefulness and making an unfair use of laughter. Those who detect irony in Comedy do so because they choose to see it in life. Poverty, says the satirist, has nothing harder in itself than that it makes men ridiculous. But poverty is never ridiculous to comic perception until it attempts to make its rags conceal its bareness in a forlorn attempt at decency, or foolishly to rival ostentation. Caleb Balderstone, in his endeavour to keep up the honour of a noble household in a state of beggary, is an exquisitely comic character. In the case of 'poor relatives,' on the other hand, it is the rich, whom they perplex, that are really comic; and to laugh at the former, not seeing the comedy of the latter, is to betray dulness of vision. Humourist and Satirist frequently hunt together as Ironeïsts in pursuit of the grotesque, to the exclusion of the Comic. That was an affecting moment in the history of the Prince Regent, when the First Gentleman of Europe burst into tears at a sarcastic remark of Beau Brummell's on the cut of his coat. Humour, Satire, Irony, pounce on it altogether as their common prey. The Comic spirit eyes but does not touch it. Put into action, it would be farcical. It is too gross for Comedy.

Incidents of a kind casting ridicule on our unfortunate

nature instead of our conventional life, provoke derisive laughter, which thwarts the Comic idea. But derision is foiled by the play of the intellect. Most of doubtful causes in contest are open to Comic interpretation, and any intellectual pleading of a doubtful cause contains germs of an Idea of Comedy.

The laughter of satire is a blow in the back or the face. The laughter of Comedy is impersonal and of unrivalled politeness, nearer a smile; often no more than a smile. It laughs through the mind, for the mind directs it; and it might be called the humour of the mind.

One excellent test of the civilization of a country, as I have said, I take to be the flourishing of the Comic idea and Comedy; and the test of true Comedy is that it shall awaken thoughtful laughter.

If you believe that our civilization is founded in common-sense (and it is the first condition of sanity to believe it), you will, when contemplating men, discern a Spirit overhead; not more heavenly than the light flashed upward from glassy surfaces, but luminous and watchful; never shooting beyond them nor lagging in the rear; so closely attached to them that it may be taken for a slavish reflex, until its features are studied. It has the sage's brows, and the sunny malice of a faun lurks at the corners of the half-closed lips drawn in an idle wariness of half tension. That slim feasting smile, shaped like the long-bow, was once a big round satyr's laugh, that flung up the brows like a fortress lifted by gunpowder. The laugh will come again, but it will be of the order of the smile, finely tempered, showing sunlight of the mind, mental richness rather than noisy enormity. Its common aspect is one of unsolicitous observation, as if surveying a full field and having leisure to dart on its chosen morsels, without any fluttering eagerness. Men's future upon earth does not attract

it; their honesty and shapeliness in the present does; and whenever they wax out of proportion, overblown, affected, pretentious, bombastical, hypocritical, pedantic, fantastically delicate; whenever it sees them self-deceived or hoodwinked, given to run riot in idolatries, drifting into vanities, congregating in absurdities, planning shortsightedly, plotting dementedly; whenever they are at variance with their professions, and violate the unwritten but perceptible laws binding them in consideration one to another; whenever they offend sound reason, fair justice; are false in humility or mined with conceit, individually, or in the bulk—the Spirit overhead will look humanely malign and cast an oblique light on them, followed by volleys of silvery laughter. That is the Comic Spirit.

Not to distinguish it is to be bull-blind to the spiritual, and to deny the existence of a mind of man where minds of men are in working conjunction.

You must, as I have said, believe that our state of society is founded in common-sense, otherwise you will not be struck by the contrasts the Comic Spirit perceives, or have it to look to for your consolation. You will, in fact, be standing in that peculiar oblique beam of light, yourself illuminated to the general eye as the very object of chase and doomed quarry of the thing obscure to you. But to feel its presence and to see it is your assurance that many sane and solid minds are with you in what you are experiencing: and this of itself spares you the pain of satirical heat, and the bitter craving to strike heavy blows. You share the sublime of wrath, that would not have hurt the foolish, but merely demonstrate their foolishness. Molière was contented to revenge himself on the critics of the École des Femmes, by writing the Critique de l'École des Femmes, one of the wisest as well as the playfullest of studies in

criticism. A perception of the comic spirit gives high fellowship. You become a citizen of the selecter world, the highest we know of in connection with our old world, which is not supermundane. Look there for your unchallengeable upper class! You feel that you are one of this our civilized community, that you cannot escape from it, and would not if you could. Good hope sustains you; weariness does not overwhelm you; in isolation you see no charms for vanity; personal pride is greatly moderated. Nor shall your title of citizenship exclude you from worlds of imagination or of devotion. The Comic spirit is not hostile to the sweetest songfully poetic. Chaucer bubbles with it: Shakespeare overflows: there is a mild moon's ray of it (pale with superrefinement through distance from our flesh and blood planet) in Comus. Pope has it, and it is the daylight side of the night half obscuring Cowper. It is only hostile to the priestly element, when that, by baleful swelling, transcends and overlaps the bounds of its office: and then, in extreme cases, it is too true to itself to speak, and veils the lamp: as, for example, the spectacle of Bossuet over the dead body of Molière: at which the dark angels may, but men do not laugh.

We have had comic pulpits, for a sign that the laughter-moving and the worshipful may be in alliance: I know not how far comic, or how much assisted in seeming so by the unexpectedness and the relief of its appearance: at least they are popular, they are said to win the ear. Laughter is open to perversion, like other good things; the scornful and the brutal sorts are not unknown to us; but the laughter directed by the Comic spirit is a harmless wine, conducing to sobriety in the degree that it enlivens. It enters you like fresh air into a study; as when one of the sudden contrasts of the comic idea floods the brain like reassuring daylight. You are cognizant of the true

kind by feeling that you take it in, savour it, and have what flowers live on, natural air for food. That which you give out—the joyful roar—is not the better part; let that go to good fellowship and the benefit of the lungs. Aristophanes promises his auditors that if they will retain the ideas of the comic poet carefully, as they keep dried fruits in boxes, their garments shall smell odoriferous of wisdom throughout the year. The boast will not be thought an empty one by those who have choice friends that have stocked themselves according to his directions. Such treasuries of sparkling laughter are wells in our desert. Sensitiveness to the comic laugh is a step in civilization. To shrink from being an object of it is a step in cultivation. We know the degree of refinement in men by the matter they will laugh at, and the ring of the laugh; but we know likewise that the larger natures are distinguished by the great breadth of their power of laughter, and no one really loving Molière is refined by that love to despise or be dense to Aristophanes, though it may be that the lover of Aristophanes will not have risen to the height of Molière. Embrace them both, and you have the whole scale of laughter in your breast. Nothing in the world surpasses in stormy fun the scene in The Frogs, when Bacchus and Xanthias receive their thrashings from the hands of businesslike Œacus, to discover which is the divinity of the two, by his imperviousness to the mortal condition of pain, and each, under the obligation of not crying out, makes believe that his horrible bellow —the god's *iou iou* being the lustier—means only the stopping of a sneeze, or horseman sighted, or the prelude to an invocation to some deity: and the slave contrives that the god shall get the bigger lot of blows. Passages of Rabelais, one or two in Don Quixote, and the Supper in the Manner of the Ancients, in Peregrine Pickle, are

of a similar cataract of laughter. But it is not illuminating; it is not the laughter of the mind. Molière's laughter, in his purest comedies, is ethereal, as light to our nature, as colour to our thoughts. The Misanthrope and the Tartuffe have no audible laughter; but the characters are steeped in the Comic Spirit. They quicken the mind through laughter, from coming out of the mind; and the mind accepts them because they are clear interpretations of certain chapters of the Book lying open before us all. Between these two stand Shakespeare and Cervantes, with the richer laugh of heart and mind in one; with much of the Aristophanic robustness, something of Molière's delicacy.

The laughter heard in circles not pervaded by the Comic idea, will sound harsh and soulless, like versified prose, if you step into them with a sense of the distinction. You will fancy you have changed your habitation to a planet remoter from the sun. You may be among powerful brains, too. You will not find poets—or but a stray one, over-worshipped. You will find learned men undoubtedly, professors, reputed philosophers, and illustrious dilettanti. They have in them, perhaps, every element composing light, except the Comic. They read verse, they discourse of art; but their eminent faculties are not under that vigilant sense of a collective supervision, spiritual and present, which we have taken note of. They build a temple of arrogance; they speak much in the voice of oracles; their hilarity, if it does not dip in grossness, is usually a form of pugnacity.

Insufficiency of sight in the eye looking outward has deprived them of the eye that should look inward. They have never weighed themselves in the delicate balance of the Comic idea so as to obtain a suspicion of the rights and dues of the world; and they have, in

consequence, an irritable personality. A very learned English professor crushed an argument in a political discussion, by asking his adversary angrily: 'Are you aware, sir, that I am a philologer?'

The practice of polite society will help in training them, and the professor on a sofa with beautiful ladies on each side of him, may become their pupil and a scholar in manners without knowing it: he is at least a fair and pleasing spectacle to the Comic Muse. But the society named polite is volatile in its adorations, and to-morrow will be petting a bronzed soldier, or a black African, or a prince, or a spiritualist: ideas cannot take root in its ever-shifting soil. It is besides addicted in self-defence to gabble exclusively of the affairs of its rapidly revolving world, as children on a whirligo-round bestow their attention on the wooden horse or cradle ahead of them, to escape from giddiness and preserve a notion of identity. The professor is better out of a circle that often confounds by lionizing, sometimes annoys by abandoning, and always confuses. The school that teaches gently what peril there is lest a cultivated head should still be coxcomb's, and the collisions which may befall high-soaring minds, empty or full, is more to be recommended than the sphere of incessant motion supplying it with material.

Lands where the Comic spirit is obscure overhead are rank with raw crops of matter. The traveller accustomed to smooth highways and people not covered with burrs and prickles is amazed, amid so much that is fair and cherishable, to come upon such curious barbarism. An Englishman paid a visit of admiration to a professor in the Land of Culture, and was introduced by him to another distinguished professor, to whom he took so cordially as to walk out with him alone one afternoon. The first professor, an erudite entirely worthy of the

sentiment of scholarly esteem prompting the visit, behaved (if we exclude the dagger) with the vindictive jealousy of an injured Spanish beauty. After a short prelude of gloom and obscure explosions, he discharged upon his faithless admirer the bolts of passionate logic familiar to the ears of flighty caballeros :—'Either I am a fit object of your admiration, or I am not. Of these things one—either you are competent to judge, in which case I stand condemned by you ; or you are incompetent, and therefore impertinent, and you may betake yourself to your country again, hypocrite!' The admirer was for persuading the wounded scholar that it is given to us to be able to admire two professors at a time. He was driven forth.

Perhaps this might have occurred in any country, and a comedy of The Pedant, discovering the greedy humanity within the dusty scholar, would not bring it home to one in particular. I am mindful that it was in Germany, when I observe that the Germans have gone through no comic training to warn them of the sly, wise emanation eyeing them from aloft, nor much of satirical. Heinrich Heine has not been enough to cause them to smart and meditate. Nationally, as well as individually, when they are excited they are in danger of the grotesque, as when, for instance, they decline to listen to evidence, and raise a national outcry because one of German blood has been convicted of crime in a foreign country. They are acute critics, yet they still wield clubs in controversy. Compare them in this respect with the people schooled in La Bruyère, La Fontaine, Molière ; with the people who have the figures of a Trissotin and a Vadius before them for a comic warning of the personal vanities of the caressed professor. It is more than difference of race. It is the difference of traditions, temper, and style, which comes of schooling.

The French controversialist is a polished swordsman, to be dreaded in his graces and courtesies. The German is Orson, or the mob, or a marching army, in defence of a good case or a bad—a big or a little. His irony is a missile of terrific tonnage: sarcasm he emits like a blast from a dragon's mouth. He must and will be Titan. He stamps his foe under-foot, and is astonished that the creature is not dead, but stinging; for, in truth, the Titan is contending, by comparison, with a god.

When the Germans lie on their arms, looking across the Alsatian frontier at the crowds of Frenchmen rushing to applaud L'ami Fritz at the Théâtre Français, looking and considering the meaning of that applause, which is grimly comic in its political response to the domestic moral of the play—when the Germans watch and are silent, their force of character tells. They are kings in music, we may say princes in poetry, good speculators in philosophy, and our leaders in scholarship. That so gifted a race, possessed moreover of the stern good sense which collects the waters of laughter to make the wells, should show at a disadvantage, I hold for a proof, instructive to us, that the discipline of the Comic Spirit is needful to their growth. We see what they can reach to in that great figure of modern manhood, Goethe. They are a growing people; they are conversable as well; and when their men, as in France, and at intervals at Berlin tea-tables, consent to talk on equal terms with their women, and to listen to them, their growth will be accelerated and be shapelier. Comedy, or in any form the Comic spirit, will then come to them to cut some figures out of the block, show them the mirror, enliven and irradiate the social intelligence.

Modern French comedy is commendable for the directness of the study of actual life, as far as that, which is but the early step in such a scholarship, can be of

service in composing and colouring the picture. A consequence of this crude, though well-meant, realism is the collision of the writers in their scenes and incidents, and in their characters. The Muse of most of them is an *Aventurière*. She is clever, and a certain diversion exists in the united scheme for confounding her. The object of this person is to reinstate herself in the decorous world; and either, having accomplished this purpose through deceit, she has a *nostalgie de la boue*, that eventually casts her back into it, or she is exposed in her course of deception when she is about to gain her end. A very good, innocent young man is her victim, or a very astute, goodish young man obstructs her path. This latter is enabled to be the champion of the decorous world by knowing the indecorous well. He has assisted in the progress of Aventurières downward; he will not help them to ascend. The world is with him; and certainly it is not much of an ascension they aspire to; but what sort of a figure is he? The triumph of a candid realism is to show him no hero. You are to admire him (for it must be supposed that realism pretends to waken some admiration) as a credibly living young man; no better, only a little firmer and shrewder, than the rest. If, however, you think at all, after the curtain has fallen, you are likely to think that the Aventurières have a case to plead against him. True, and the author has not said anything to the contrary; he has but painted from the life; he leaves his audience to the reflections of unphilosophic minds upon life, from the specimen he has presented in the bright and narrow circle of a spy-glass.

I do not know that the fly in amber is of any particular use, but the Comic idea enclosed in a comedy makes it more generally perceptible and portable, and that is an advantage. There is a benefit to men in

taking the lessons of Comedy in congregations, for it enlivens the wits ; and to writers it is beneficial, for they must have a clear scheme, and even if they have no idea to present, they must prove that they have made the public sit to them before the sitting to see the picture. And writing for the stage would be a corrective of a too-incrusted scholarly style, into which some great ones fall at times. It keeps minor writers to a definite plan, and to English. Many of them now swelling a plethoric market, in the composition of novels, in pun-manufactories and in journalism ; attached to the machinery forcing perishable matter on a public that swallows voraciously and groans ; might, with encouragement, be attending to the study of art in literature. Our critics appear to be fascinated by the quaintness of our public, as the world is when our beast-garden has a new importation of magnitude, and the creature's appetite is reverently consulted. They stipulate for a writer's popularity before they will do much more than take the position of umpires to record his failure or success. Now, the pig supplies the most popular of dishes, but it is not accounted the most honoured of animals, unless it be by the cottager. Our public might surely be led to try other, perhaps finer, meat. It has good taste in song. It might be taught as justly, on the whole, and the sooner when the cottager's view of the feast shall cease to be the humble one of our literary critics, to extend this capacity for delicate choosing in the direction of the matter arousing laughter.

INTRODUCTIONS

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INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTERS OF LADY DUFF GORDON [1]

The letters of Lady Duff Gordon are an introduction to her in person. She wrote as she talked, and that is not always the note of private correspondence, the pen being such an official instrument. Readers growing familiar with her voice will soon have assurance that, addressing the public, she would not have blotted a passage or affected a tone for the applause of all Europe. Yet she could own to a liking for flattery, and say of the consequent vanity, that an insensibility to it is inhuman. Her humour was a mouthpiece of nature. She inherited from her father the judicial mind, and her fine conscience brought it to bear on herself as well as on the world, so that she would ask 'Are we so much better?' when someone supremely erratic was dangled before the popular eye. She had not studied her Goethe to no purpose. Nor did the very ridiculous creature who is commonly the outcast of all compassion miss having the tolerant word from her, however much she might be of necessity in the laugh, for Molière also was of her repertory. Hers was the charity which is perceptive and embracing: we may feel certain that she was never a dupe of the poor souls, Christian and Muslim, whose tales of simple misery or injustice moved her to friendly service. Egyptians,

[1] Introduction: *Lady Duff Gordon's Letters from Egypt*. Published by Mr. Brimley Johnston. 1902.

consule Junio would have met the human interpreter in her, for a picture to set beside that of the vexed Satirist. She saw clearly into the later Nile products, though her view of them was affectionate ; but had they been exponents of original sin, her charitableness would have found the philosophical word on their behalf, for the reason that they were not in the place of vantage. The service she did to them was a greater service done to her country, by giving these quivering creatures of the baked land proof that a Christian Englishwoman could be companionable, tender, beneficently motherly with them, despite the reputed insurmountable barriers of alien race and religion. Sympathy was quick in her breast for all the diverse victims of mischance ; a shade of it, that was not indulgence but knowledge of the roots of evil, for malefactors and for the fool. Against the cruelty of despotic rulers and the harshness of society she was openly at war, at a time when championship of the lonely or the fallen was not common. Still in this, as in everything controversial, it was the way with her. That singular union of the balanced intellect with the lively heart arrested even in advocacy the floods pressing for pathos. Her aim was at practical measures of help ; she doubted the uses of sentimentality in moving tyrants or multitudes to do the thing needed. Moreover, she distrusted eloquence, Parliamentary, forensic, literary ; thinking that the plain facts are the most persuasive speakers in a good cause, and that rhetoric is to be suspected as the flourish over a weak one. Does it soften the obdurate, kindle the tardily inflammable ? Only for a day, and only in cases of extreme urgency, is an appeal to emotion of value for the gain of a day. Thus it was that she never forced her voice, though her feelings might be at heat and she possessed the literary art.

She writes from her home on the Upper Nile : ‘ In

this country one gets to see how much more beautiful a perfectly natural expression is than any degree of the mystical expression of the best painters.' It is by her banishing of literary colouring matter that she brings the Arab and Copt home to us as none other has done, by her unlaboured pleading that she touches to the heart. She was not one to 'spread gold-leaf over her acquaintances and make them shine,' as Horace Walpole says of Madame de Sévigné; they would have been set shining from within, perhaps with a mild lustre, sensibly to the observant, more credibly of the garden sort. Her dislike of superlatives, when the marked effect had to be produced, and it was not the literary performance she could relish as well as any of us, renders hard the task of portraying a woman whose character calls them forth. To him knowing her they would not fit; her individuality passes between epithets. The reading of a sentence of panegyric (commonly a thing of extension) deadened her countenance, if it failed to quicken the corners of her lips; the distended truth in it exhibited the comic shadow on the wall behind. That haunting demon of human eulogy is quashed by the manner adopted from instinct and training. Of her it was known to all intimate with her that she could not speak falsely in praise, nor unkindly in depreciation, however much the constant play of her humour might tempt her to exalt or diminish beyond the bounds. But when for the dispersion of nonsense about men or things, and daintiness held up the veil against rational eyesight, the *gros mot* was demanded, she could utter it, as from the Bench, with the like authority and composure.

In her youth she was radiantly beautiful, with dark brows on a brilliant complexion, the head of a Roman man, and features of Grecian line, save for the classic Greek wall of the nose off the forehead. Women, not

enthusiasts, inclined rather to criticize, and to criticize so independent a member of their sex particularly, have said that her entry into a ballroom took the breath. Poetical comparisons run under heavy weight in prose, but it would seem in truth, from the reports of her, that whenever she appeared she could be likened to a Selene breaking through cloud ; and further, the splendid vessel was richly freighted. Trained by a scholar, much in the society of scholarly men, having an innate bent to exactitude, and with a ready tongue docile to the curb, she stepped into the world armed to be a match for it. She cut her way through the accustomed troops of adorers, like what you will that is buoyant and swims gallantly. Her quality of the philosophical humour carried her easily over the shoals or the deeps in the way of a woman claiming her right to an independent judgement upon the minor rules of conduct, as well as upon matters of the mind. An illustrious foreigner, *en tête-à-tête* with her over some abstract theme, drops abruptly on a knee to protest, overpowered ; and in that posture he is patted on the head, while the subject of conversation is continued by the benevolent lady, until the form of ointment she administers for his beseeching expression and his pain compels him to rise and resume his allotted part with a mouth of acknowledging laughter. Humour, as a beautiful woman's defensive weapon, is probably the best that can be called in aid for the bringing of suppliant men to their senses. And so manageable are they when the idea of comedy and the chord of chivalry are made to vibrate, that they (supposing them of the impressionable race which is overpowered by Aphrodite's favourites) will be withdrawn from their great aims, and transformed into happy crust-munching devotees—in other words, fast friends. Lady Duff Gordon had many, and the truest and of all lands. She had, on the other hand,

her number of detractors, whom she excused. What woman is without them, if she offends the convention, is a step in advance of her day, and, in this instance, never hesitates upon the needed occasion to dub things with their right names. She could appreciate their disapproval of her in giving herself the airs of a man, pronouncing verdicts on affairs in the style of a man, preferring associating with men. So it was ; and besides she smoked. Her physician had hinted at a soothing for an irritated throat that might come of some whiffs of tobacco. She tried a cigar and liked it, and smoked from that day, in her library chair and on horseback. When she saw no harm in an act, opinion had no greater effect on her than summer flies on one with a fan. The country people, sorely tried by the spectacle at first, remembered the gentle deeds and homely chat of an eccentric lady and pardoned her, who was often to be seen discoursing familiarly with the tramp on the road, incapable of denying her house-door to the lost dog attached by some instinct to her heels. In the circles named 'upper' there was mention of women unsexing themselves. She preferred the society of men, on the plain ground that they discuss matters of weight, and are—the pick of them—of open speech, more liberal, more genial, better comrades. Was it wonderful to hear them, knowing her as they did, unite in calling her *cœur d'or* ? And women could say it of her, for the reasons known to women. Her intimate friendships were with women as with men. The closest friend of this most manfully-minded of women was one of her sex, little resembling her except in downright truthfulness, lovingness, and heroic fortitude.

The hospitable house at Esher gave its welcome not merely to men and women of distinction ; the humble undistinguished were made joyous guests there, whether commonplace or counting among the hopeful. Their

hostess knew how to shelter the sensitively silent at table, if they were unable to take encouragement and join the flow. Their faces at least responded to her bright look on one or the other of them when something worthy of memory sparkled flying. She had the laugh that rocks the frame, but it was usually with a triumphant smile that she greeted things good to the ear; and her own manner of telling was concise, on the lines of the running subject, to carry it along, not to produce an effect—which is like the horrid gap in air after a blast of powder. Quotation came when it sprang to the lips and was native. She was shrewd and cogent, invariably calm in argument, sitting over it, not making a duel, as the argumentative are prone to do; and a strong point scored against her received the honours due to a noble enemy. No pose as mistress of a salon shuffling the guests marked her treatment of them; she was their comrade, one of the pack. This can be the case only when a governing lady is at all points their equal, more than a player of trump cards. In England, in her day, while health was with her, there was one house where men and women conversed. When that house perforce was closed, a light had gone out in our country.

The fatal brilliancy of skin indicated the fell disease which ultimately drove her into exile, to die in exile. Lucie Duff Gordon was of the order of women of whom a man of many years may say that their like is to be met but once or twice in a lifetime.

INTRODUCTION TO W. M. THACKERAY'S 'THE FOUR GEORGES' [1]

William Makepeace Thackeray was born at Calcutta, July 18, 1811, the only child of Richmond and Anne Thackeray. He received the main part of his education at the Charterhouse, as we know to our profit. Thence he passed to Cambridge, remaining there from February 1829 to sometime in 1830. To judge by quotations and allusions, his favourite of the classics was Horace, the chosen of the eighteenth century, and generally the voice of its philosophy in a prosperous country. His voyage from India gave him sight of Napoleon on the rocky island. In his young manhood he made his bow reverentially to Goethe of Weimar; which did not check his hand from setting its mark on the sickliness of Werther.

He was built of an extremely impressionable nature and a commanding good sense. He was in addition a calm observer, having 'the harvest of a quiet eye.' Of this combination with the flood of subjects brought up to judgement in his mind, came the prevalent humour, the enforced disposition to satire, the singular critical drollery, notable in his works. His parodies, even those pushed to burlesque, are an expression of criticism and are more effective than the serious method, while they rarely overstep the line of justness. The *Novels by Eminent Hands* do not pervert the originals they exaggerate. 'Sieyes an abbé, now a ferocious lifeguardsman,'

[1] Introduction to *The Four Georges*, in the Red Letter Library. By courtesy of Messrs. Blackie and Sons.

stretches the face of the rollicking Irish novelist without disfeaturing him; and the mysterious visitor to the palatial mansion in Holywell Street indicates possibilities in the Oriental imagination of the eminent statesman who stooped to conquer fact through fiction. Thackeray's attitude in his great novels is that of the composedly urbane lecturer, on a level with a select audience, assured of interesting, above requirements to excite. The slow movement of the narrative has a grace of style to charm like the dance of the Minuet de la Cour: it is the limpidity of Addison flavoured with salt of a racy vernacular; and such is the veri-similitude and the dialogue that they might seem to be heard from the mouths of living speakers. When in this way the characters of *Vanity Fair* had come to growth, their author was rightly appreciated as one of the creators in our literature, he took at once the place he will retain. With this great book and with *Esmond* and *The Newcomes*, he gave a name eminent, singular, and beloved to English fiction.

Charges of cynicism are common against all satirists, Thackeray had to bear with them. The social world he looked at did not show him heroes, only here and there a plain good soul to whom he was affectionate in the unhysterical way of an English father patting a son on the head. He described his world as an accurate observer saw it, he could not be dishonest. Not a page of his books reveals malevolence or a sneer at humanity. He was driven to the satirical task by the scenes about him. There must be the moralist in the satirist if satire is to strike. The stroke is weakened and art violated when he comes to the front. But he will always be pressing forward, and Thackeray restrained him as much as could be done, in the manner of a good-humoured constable. Thackeray may have appeared cynical to the devout by keeping him from a station in the pulpit among

congregations of the many convicted sinners. That the moralist would have occupied it and thundered had he presented us with the Fourth of the Georges we see when we read of his rejecting the solicitations of so seductive a personage for the satiric rod.

Himself one of the manliest, the kindliest of human creatures, it was the love of his art that exposed him to misinterpretation. He did stout service in his day. If the bad manners he scourged are now lessened to some degree we pay a debt in remembering that we owe much to him, and if what appears incurable remains with us, a continued reading of his works will at least help to combat it.

INTRODUCTION TO 'THE JAPANESE SPIRIT'[1]

We have had illuminating books upon Japan. Those of Lafcadio Hearn will always be remembered for the poetry he brought in them to bear upon the poetic aspects of the country and the people. Buddhism had a fascination for him, as it had for Mr. Fielding in his remarkable book on the practice of this religion in Burma. There is also the work of Captain Brinkley, to which we are largely indebted.

These lectures by a son of the land, delivered at the University of London, are compendious and explicit in a degree that enables us to form a summary of much that has been otherwise partially obscure, so that we get nearer to the secret of this singular race than we have had the chance of doing before. He traces the course of Confucianism, Laoism, Shintoism, in the instruction it has given to his countrymen for the practice of virtue, as to which Lao-tze informs us with a piece of 'Chinese metaphysics' that can be had without having recourse to the dictionary: 'Superior virtue is non-virtue. Therefore it has virtue. Inferior virtue never loses sight of virtue. Therefore it has no virtue. Superior virtue is non-assertive and without pretension. Inferior virtue asserts and makes pretensions.' It is childishly subtle and easy to be understood of a young people in whose minds Buddhism and Shintoism formed a part.

The Japanese have had the advantage of possessing

[1] Introduction to *The Japanese Spirit*. By G. Okakura. By the courtesy of Messrs. Constable and Company.

a native nobility who were true nobles, not invaders and subjugators. They were, in the highest sense, men of honour, before the time of this dreadful war. Harakiri was an imperative resource, under the smallest suspicion of disgrace. How rigidly they understood and practised virtue, in the sense above cited, is exemplified in the way they renounced their privileges for the sake of the commonweal when the gates of Japan were thrown open to the West.

Bushido, or the 'way of the Samurai,' has become almost an English word, so greatly has it impressed us with the principle of renunciation on behalf of the country's welfare. This splendid conception of duty has been displayed again and again at Port Arthur and on the fields of Manchuria, not only by the Samurai, but by a glorious commonalty imbued with the spirit of their chiefs.

All this is shown clearly by Professor Okakura in this valuable book.

It proves to general comprehension that such a people must be unconquerable even if temporarily defeated; and that is not the present prospect of things. Who could conquer a race of forty millions having the contempt of death when their country's inviolability is at stake! Death, moreover, is despised by them because they do not believe in it. 'The departed, although invisible, are thought to be leading their ethereal life in the same world, in much the same state as that to which they had been accustomed while on earth.' And so, 'when the father of a Japanese family begins a journey of any length, the raised part of his room will be made sacred to his memory during his temporary absence; his family will gather in front of it and think of him, expressing their devotion and love in words and gifts in kind.' In the hundreds of thousands of families that have

some one or other of their members fighting for the nation in this dreadful war, there will not be even one solitary house where the mother, wife, or sister is not practising this simple rite of endearment for the beloved and absent member of the family. Spartans in the fight, Stoics in their grief.

Concerning the foolish talk of the Yellow Peril, a studious perusal of this book will show it to be fatuous. It is at least unlikely in an extreme degree that such a people, reckless of life though they be in front of danger, but Epicurean in their wholesome love of pleasure and pursuit of beauty, will be inflated to insanity by the success of their arms. Those writers who have seen something malignant and inimical behind their gracious politeness, have been mere visitors on the fringe of the land, alarmed by their skill in manufacturing weapons and explosives—for they are inventive as well as imitative, a people not to be trifled with ; but this was because their instinct as well as their emissaries warned them of a pressing need for the means of war. Japan and China have had experience of Western nations, and that is at the conscience of suspicious minds.

It may be foreseen that when the end has come, the Kaiser, always honourably eager for the influence of his people, will draw a glove over the historic ' Mailed Fist,' and offer it to them frankly. It will surely be accepted, and that of France, we may hope ; Russia as well. England is her ally—to remain so, we trust ; America is her friend. She has, in fact, won the admiration of Friend and Foe alike.

INTRODUCTION TO A VOLUME OF THE POEMS OF DORA SIGERSON SHORTER [1]

An Introduction to a book wears the sad aspect of an advocate addressing a frigid jury. The foreword should be an afterword, and find its place in an appendix if anywhere. When we have an Introduction to a volume of poems, reviewers, even modern reviewers, might take it as a plea in apology or for favour. But modern reviewers are more indulgent. How great the difference between them and those of the old order is brought to my mind by a criticism in an aged quarterly Review (not the *Quarterly* nor the *Edinburgh*, though they had their merits) of Coleridge's 'Christabel,' in which there was the quotation :—

> 'Tis a month before the month of May,
> And the Spring comes slowly up this way.'

Upon this was the comment 'Why could not Mr. Coleridge tell us plainly that it was the month of April?' We are in a clearer atmosphere at present as to reviewers, whatever may be said of the poets. Nevertheless an Irish woman, writing from her heart of the legends of her country and the superstitions of the peasantry, may have her way smoothed in advance by some contribution of the Celtic mind. And she writes ballads too, which are rather in disfavour now.

The mind of the Celt has been much discussed. It

[1] Introduction to *The Collected Poems of Dora Sigerson Shorter*. London, 1907. By the courtesy of Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton.

is generally taken to be overpoweringly emotional, vapourised as well, and fantastical, remote, divorced from reality. Such is the impression of it on the Saxon mind. But reality has more than one way of speaking. The rightly poetic is only another language for the flat prose. Thus a fair young cousin loves a gallant lord and he gives her a kiss on the cheek as he rides away, caring but for the chase. She vows in her heart that he shall have his wish: she swallows a potion. Red Richard sees a white doe ahead of him, and pursues her; she has the dark eyes of his cousin; day after day she flits before the exasperated hunter until at last his spear transfixes her. Returning home he finds the corpse of his cousin, his spear buried in her breast. Prose would put it that Red Richard, preferring the chase, like Adonis, was teased by his fair cousin's affection, and ultimately caused her death by his cruelty. Facts work on the Celtic mind in its imaginative exercise like the flame of a lamp crossing the eyelids of a sleeper. Symbolism swallows Reality, but Reality is read through it, if we take the trouble.

A false rhyme may be found in this poet's ballads. There has been of late a cry for the more rigid enforcement of rhyme; strange to hear when the many writers of verse are wearing the poor stock we have to shreds. That hard consonated smack on the ear of an exact similarity of sound is required in what is called our heroic verse which relies for its effect on the timely clapper. In lyrics the demand for music is imperative, and rhymes there must be. Unhappily the monosyllables chiefly in request are a scanty lot. Attempts to translate Heine and our weakness in dissyllables baffles the experiment. An unrivalled instrumentalist like Mr. Swinburne, prince of lyrists, does marvels with the language. Lesser men, however, correct their rhyming, betray the cramp of their hand in frequent repetitions of the rhymes. We can

generally anticipate the line as well as the rhyme to come. A ballad, of which the main point is to tell a story metrically, is not bound to strictness in rhyme, for the mind is made more attentive than the ear. Mrs. Dora Sigerson Shorter has the gift of metrical narrative. Her gentle sincerity holds her to the story. Even when her emotions are not roused, the art of compression and progression, as in ' The Dean of Santiago,' is shown. Among the minor pieces ' The Vagrant Heart ' will strike an echo in many a woman's breast. Further work, especially ballads, is to be expected from her, Irish or other. Her country supplies one of the richest of fields.

REVIEWS

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'HOMER'S ILIAD IN ENGLISH RHYMED VERSE.'[1] By Charles Merivale, B.D., D.C.L. London: Strahan and Co.

It was the recommendation of one of our poets that the measure of *Marmion* should be taken for an English version of the *Iliad*. He seems to have thought it more suitable than Chapman's line for getting the swell and rush, and the emphatic pause here and there—the seventh wave, as one may say. By this time it has been seen that nothing of the sort is to be obtained from a sustained number of English hexameters pretending to dignity.

The hexameter sets our Muse on the slack-rope with a pole of very imperfect balance; she has neither the running nor the stamping foot for it. Mr. Dart's carefully done first twelve books, though they are not an example of what can be accomplished in hexametrical English, show sufficiently that it is an insuperable task to keep clear of a prosy monotony in this form of verse. The meritorious independence of rhyme is enjoyed equally by blank verse, which is better adapted to the language. But Homer was a singer, and his poem was meant for recital. The question to be asked of a translation of Homer is, whether it will bear declamation. As a rule blank verse translators are stiff; they do not carry on the roll from line to line, or rarely with any force. Mr.

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, May 1869.

Tennyson's exquisite Specimen, from the close of the eighth book, is artfully chosen, if we are to accept it as a plea for the superior ability and charms of blank verse :—

> 'As when in heaven the stars about the moon
> Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,
> And every height comes out, and jutting peak,
> And valley, and the immeasurable heavens
> Break open to their highest, and all the stars
> Shine, and the shepherd gladdens in his heart.'

Compare with Chapman (Mr. Merivale is not here so good as usual) :—

> 'As when about the silver moon when air is free from wind,
> And stars shine clear, to whose sweet beams, high prospects, and the brows
> Of all steep hills and pinnacles, thrust themselves up for shows;
> And even the lowly valleys joy to glitter in their sight,
> When the unmeasured firmament bursts to disclose her light,
> And all the signs in heaven are seen that glad the shepherd's heart.'

Both are fine; but as soon as there is hurry, and the javelins and arrows fly, and the heroes roar, our epical verse will not sustain the comparison. If we may fancy Milton fully capable of carrying it at the highest elevation, we have to own that it would be at the entire sacrifice of the narrative homeliness. No very high flight is wanted, but a vigorous one, and the power of mounting high when the old poet calls. Chapman had this power: on the other hand his lines are loose, his rhymes too often unsatisfactory to the ear; the breaks in his lines are

Catherine O'Carrol - 1st Part

Tobt O'Carrol - 1st

Joseph O'Carrol, 2d brother - a Superannuated in the Service of Tobt father.

Patrick O'Carrol - Father of Tobt & many years resident in Asia, where he has amassed an immense fortune - Lavish, but wary; generous when he will say, Tyrannical when thwarted - dies Soldiers at time of his Sons Abduction -

* Captain Macnamara. the Son of Tobt expensive turbulent Man Spendthrift, companion, Handsome, Youth.

* Mr Reynolds Piercy. the Captains friend - a man of Subtle intrigue and Silent disposition - with profession of Love - here no fortune of his own living by Gambling Cards in Parties of comparative ease - Cash,

Robert Featherstone, Esq associate & friend of Captn Macn & Reynolds

Lady Warrington - Widow, in love with

* The Honble Lord Blanchard. a refined, Pleasure Gentleman of fortune, and Scholar -

Dicky his Valet, in love with

Sukey maid to Lady W.

Mrs
Esq. 2d Sons
Widow. Abt 2 years Standing

numerous and commonly ineffective. Take the example of Achilles upon Agamemnon :—

> 'Thou ever steep'd in wine!
> Dog's face! with heart but of a hart! that nor in th' open eye
> Of fight dar'st thrust into a press; nor with our noblest lie
> In secret ambush. These works seem too full of death for thee:
> 'Tis safer far in the open host to dare an injury
> To any crosser of thy lust. Thou subject-eating king!'

Mr. Merivale gets his lines out without these stoppages for breath, in imitation of his model :—

> 'Ha! wine-besotten, hound-eyed, hind-hearted, thou that durst
> Ne'er in the ranks thy courage try, and stand among the first!
> Nor ever with our leaders the dexterous ambush set,
> For in the open and the close are death and danger met!
> Ha! better snatch the guerdon and lawful share of those,
> Through the broad battle of the Greeks that dare thy pride oppose!
> A king that sacks his people!'

The fourth line does not sound very bitter: 'But that would seem to thee as bad as death,' has to be distended for the rhyme's sake; and this is the weakness of the ballad form in a translation of Homer. There is a constant temptation, and sometimes a necessity, to overdo him. Nevertheless, the *Chevy Chase* ballad measure, varied at discretion by Marmion's rhymed four-feet couplet, or triplet, has in Mr. Merivale's hands a delightful animation and a splendid ring. He saves his Homer from nodding in the catalogue of the ships—a thing that has not been achieved by blank verse

translators—even while copying this happy garrulous precision :—

> ‘ Oïlean Ajax swiftfoot the Locrian armies led ;
> A lesser, not so stout a man
> As Ajax Telamonian :
> Much lesser ;—short was he.’

His archaic ballad tongue is not intrusive ; it is used just enough to give the savour of the original. In one place, where Homer tells over the Nereïds crowding up round Thetis,—*Ἔνθ' ἄρ' ἔην Γλαύκη τε*,—Mr. Merivale evades a difficulty by boldly translating line for line in no particular measure, and trusting to the assonants for his effect exactly as they stand in the original :—

> ‘ Now these Nymphs were Glaucè, Thalia too, Cymodocè too,
> Nesaiè and Spio, Thoè too, and Hália brown-eyed,
> Cymothoè too, and Actæa, and Limnoréa,
> And Melitè and Iæra, and Amphithoè, and Agavè ;
> Doto too, and Proto, Pheusa too, Dynamanè too,
> Dexamenè too, and Amphinomè, and Callianira,
> Doris and Panopè, and famous-in-song Galatéa ;
> Nemertès too, and Apseudes, and Callianassa :
> And there are Clymenè, Ianica too, and Ianassa,
> Mœra and Orithyia, and beautiful-haired Amathéa.’

An extremely delicate taste checked him from versifying this ‘ tale ’ of nymphs. The variation is of itself not unpleasant. To conclude an inadequate notice of so admirable a piece of work, this translation of Homer appears to me to bear the test of recital, and I know of no other that will. The battles are never wanting in fire and motion, nor the dialogues in spirit. Mr. Merivale’s resources of diction and versification, as well as his accomplished scholarship, are known. He has made the nation indebted to him for an Iliad, pleasant and ennobling to read, possible to declaim.

'LA MAISON FORESTIÈRE.'[1] Par MM. Erckmann-Chatrian. Paris: Hetzel; London: Williams and Norgate.

A really good *Mährchen* is almost as rare as a good lyric poem, and seems about as difficult a piece of composition for two hands; but MM. Erckmann-Chatrian put the signature of their common authorship to *La Maison Forestière*, and the work is so charming that it is a minor question how it was done. The extraordinary sympathy with which they write together is shown here even more than in *Madame Thérèse* and *Le Conscrit*, and the various tales they have published. One can, perhaps, fancy a new note being struck where their pastoral description ceases and characters are delineated, or the narration is continued; but in *La Maison Forestière* this slight change of tone would be necessitated by the change of scene, and the simplicity of the style scarcely varies, except towards the close. The strong dramatic pitch is pardonable there, though it takes a leap out of the *Mährchen* proper.

A young Düsseldorf artist is introduced on a pedestrian tour across the Hundsrück chain into the old German forest-land of the *bunter Sandstein*, where you find old castles enough, and wooded lakes, and legends, and a faithful belief in them. The sylvan sketches are given with the minuteness which Jean Jacques spread the taste for in French literature, and Saint-Pierre, and subsequently Madame Sand, dropping apostrophes, made an

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, January 1867, New Series, vol. i. p. 126.

element of their fictions. An old forest-keeper, Franz Honeck, who has served in his youth under the Great Emperor, like most of MM. Erckmann-Chatrian's characters, gives the traveller entertainment in his hut, 'La Maison Forestière,' where he lives with his two grandchildren, Loïse and Kaspar, and he does not object to have his portrait painted in return for it. You expect the sentimental son of Düsseldorf to fall in love with the pretty Loïse. He is moving fast in that direction, when one morning he is awakened by a wild howling of the dogs, lowing of the cattle, neighing of the goats. The old wolf of the Veierschloss is leading its whelps around Franz Honeck's forest hut. What soul inhabits the unappeasable brute? Is it that of Vittikâb, the last of the Burckars, who set flames to the Veierschloss and scattered its ashes on his perished race? Or is it that of Zaphéri Honeck, Vittikâb's chief huntsman, who followed his master when the Burckar lighted Landau with devouring fire, and tossed the babes and children into it, and was cursed by an aged peasant holding his grandchild up in the midst of the fire? It may be Zaphéri's soul or Vittikâb's. Once a year the old wolf and its whelps circle the hut, and Loïse falls in a trance. Zaphéri was Franz Honeck's seventh or eighth ancestor. Franz is ashamed of him; but though a grievous sinner, Zaphéri died repentant, and a descendant should rather pity him. He and Vittikâb hunted the beasts, and pillaged the castles, and ravaged the land, like destroying torches. But their end was different, and the tale runs thus. The Burckar—called the *Comte Sauvage*, for the hunter of beasts was half a beast in aspect as well as in character, being hairy and of immense length of arm—had a child by his first wife, a creature upon which he looked as on a thing sent to him from hell, and nothing but the agony of the mother kept him from dashing this disgrace of his

blood to atoms. The huntsmen, whippers, and troopers of the Veierschloss assembled in the castle-court to salute the new Burckar who was to perpetuate the race of the ancient Suabian kings, heard Vittikâb cry over the balustrade that the new Burckar was dead, and so it was believed in the castle, for the ceremony of the burial followed at night; but Vittikâb's frightful offspring has been handed over to old Goetz, a famous huntsman; and Goetz lives with him, and rears him, locked up in a tower at one end of the Veierschloss, where Hatvine, an old woman, alone in the secret, brings food for the pair of prisoners. For twenty years after the death of Hâsoum, the monster's mother, Vittikâb carouses like one who satisfies a rage, until one day his arm fails him, and he is worsted. This causes him to reflect on the possible extinction of the Burckar line. Soon after, there are grand preparations for a marriage festival at the Veierschloss. Old Goetz in his tower hears sounds of singing and of hammers, and sees lights up the castle-walls at night. Twenty years of captivity with Hâsoum have taught him to love the creature, and be blind to his hideousness. It is imperative that Hâsoum should die. Vittikâb takes one fortifying glance at him while he lies asleep in the upper chamber of the tower, and then he gives the order to Goetz. Who shall say what prayers for Hâsoum's life and talk of his gentleness old Goetz addressed to Vittikâb's impatient ears? You can imagine that Vittikâb did not quit him without exacting his oath to obey. Goetz went up to Hâsoum, and looked at him asleep, and at the bars and beams whereon Hâsoum swung when awake, and at the lake-water beyond the woods, the narrow boundary of Hâsoum's life, all of which knocked pitifully at the old man's heart; and he thought, 'Since he has feet to run with, why should he not run?' Master Zaphéri Honcck meantime has

the chief burden of the entertainment resting upon his shoulders ; for, above all, the day of Vittikâb's nuptials must be celebrated by a mighty chase. Presently comes Kaspar Rebock, the keen huntsman, to Zaphéri and exhibits to him mysteriously a track, imprinted on a handful of mossy turf, that is a track of no beast known. Zaphéri inspects the track with gathering astonishment. He ruminates on it, discovers that the new beast must be swift, and shy, and powerful, and that it does not fear fire, and is altogether such a beast as his lord Vittikâb would love to follow and to slay. He promises Vittikâb that he shall have the mightiest hunt ever known to a chief of the Burckar line. Vittikâb, possessed with a passionate eagerness to be out and off after this miracle of venery, receives his bride and the guests, and heads them into the forest—burgraves, landgraves, mark-graves, counts, barons and squires, huntsmen and the incomparable Burckar dogs, a cross of sheep-dog, wolf, and blood-hound, who never abandoned a track or were baffled. The dogs are soon upon the scent, and fill the valleys with the petulant fury of their cries. Over shoulders of hills, across green dells, now towards the plains, back to the forest recesses, in and out, streams the hunting cavalcade like a coloured smoke, on the wonderful winding tracks of this amazing new beast. The horn of Vittikâb, far in advance, is heard, and the great hunter is seen urging his horse, transfigured with a madness of glee at having at last found a quarry worthy of his redoubtable dogs and himself. Zaphéri Honeck watches all from the summit of a bald rock. Joined by the hunter Kaspar Rebock, he makes for a height above one of the gorges of the hills, known as the gorge *du Pot-de-Fer*, where a wall of iron-black rock, scooped at its base in the form of a huge pot, rising sheer up, shuts the way—a place where an old fox never enters

twice. Before they have torn aside the thick holly-branches to peer below, the dogs are at battle with the beast ; and amid the uproar of an infernal pit, the two men behold, upon a coigne of the rock, a figure astonishingly tall, with a human head, wolf's ears, a hairy skin, claws of a bear, and a crine of yellow locks tossing from his neck. This figure wields an enormous oak-branch, wherewith he smites down the bloody frothing muzzles of the Burckar dogs as they take long fifteen-feet leaps, howling from the points of rock to get at him, and dangling shattered paws with red jaws plaintive to the sky. Bats and owls and night-birds dart from their nooks, and mount over the gnashing pit in clouds, till the sunlight strikes them and they descend to their troubled hollows. And now the horn of Vittikâb rings through the tumult. Honeck and Rebock hear the sharp gallow of his horse. The bellow of the horn stops with a terrible blunt roar, as of a life shot dead. The two men see their master in the turn of the gorge, white as a spectre, his eyeballs starting out, horror on his face. Horse and rider are as if blown backward. At that instant the unhappy creature fighting the dogs gives a cry of distress, like an appeal for help to one whom he has recognised, but help is too late, and he has fallen into the mass of ravening jaws. Vittikâb springs among them, shouts his son's name, ' Hâsoum ! Hâsoum ! ' Never has a Burckar fought with so splendid a courage as this Hâsoum, the last of the race. The father's entrails are torn with love for him. Dashed with the blood and brains of the dogs, he catches up his son's body by the thick yellow locks, finds him dead indeed, lays him, with one groan, on the saddle, and gallops madly for the Veierschloss.

This is a faint sketch of a piece of vigorous writing that does not outstep the sober tone of a *Mährchen.*

How Vittikâb throws his son's body on the board spread for feasting, and speaks the ' moral ' in the presence of the marriage-guests, and praises the old man Goetz, who had cast the poor youth out upon Providence rather than do a deed of murder, may be read in *La Maison Forestière*. It forms the climax explanatory, and will, I suppose, give greater satisfaction than if the emotions of the reader had not received assistance and directions.

'TRAINING IN THEORY AND PRACTICE.'[1] By Archibald Maclaren. London: Macmillan and Co., 1867.

There is no higher authority on the science of Training than Mr. Maclaren of Oxford. He writes from close observation and long experience; and even they who have brought themselves to think that the honour of the country is involved in maintaining our present picturesque speed in boat-racing, must admit that what is said by a man so thoroughly accomplished to instruct carries weight. The general aim of his book includes a special application. He treats of training with reference to rowing; and he emphatically condemns the present system of rowing—and to some extent, of training for —boat-races. If his book shall provoke controversy he will probably be all the better pleased, for it is evident that, in publishing it, he has attempted a public service. He is, however, less likely to be answered than evaded. When ladies and other exoteric spectators behold the two University eights apparently straining every muscle of their frames on the broad reach between Putney and Hammersmith, they would be incredulous of any grave professor who should tell them that what they looked on was labour indeed, but a low form of exercise; and that the men running and shouting on the banks were undergoing greater muscular exertion than the desperately-pulling crews. An appeal to the latter at the termination of the race would restore popular confidence in the supremacy of rowing in thin outriggers as an exercise. Victorious or defeated, the oarsmen believe that they have put out every fibre of their strength, and whether they

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, March 1867, New Series, vol. i. p. 380.

look distressed, as the reporters say, or row the course back again chirping, they are not likely to be persuaded that they have excelled the runners on the banks only in breathing hard, bending quick, and going swift. The sensations of the frame after a rapid expenditure of energy always justify the idea that great muscular exertion has been taken. Mr. Maclaren distinctly denies it to be the case in rowing. He is as uncompromising as a German philologer, or an English imitator of one, who strikes at the established classical tenets of faith of the comfortable scholars. Rowing, he says, has undoubtedly advanced as an *art*, and has become degraded as an *exercise*. 'It is the circumscribing of the line of muscular operation, the concentrating of the physical exertion into the narrowest channel, that has brought rowing to its present point of artistic excellence—which gives to the rower that statuesque appearance when resting on his oar, and that automatic precision of movement when in action, which constitute the very ideal of an oarsman and of a crew. The part of the body which receives the smallest share of the exercise in rowing is the chest; it has little or no employment in the muscular effort required for the propulsion of the boat; and this is impressively evident in the results. Not only does it make no advance in development in this exercise, but if it be exclusively practised, an absolutely depressing effect is experienced.' The chest *lingers*, the muscles not generally called upon lose their condition. For rowing of all kinds the exertion required is confined to a few particular muscles; but for the propulsion of a modern racing-boat, the arms and the chest are scarcely exercised at all, in the true sense of the word. The boat is so light that it meets with very little resistance in the water; consequently, as swiftness is the object to be attained, for this purpose a mechanical motion, absolutely unvaried, and 'wind' to keep it up,

are exclusively the things aimed at by those who train for rowing. Now 'wind' in this case means ability to hold the breath for a length of time, and hurry over the act of breathing—both the inspiration and expiration —'during that time in which the muscles are relaxed; that is, towards the close of the stroke, and on the rapid forward dart of the body, preparatory to another; when the breath is again held, and the chest fixed during the muscular effort,' to fortify it. This holding of the breath makes the voluntary muscles of the upper region of the trunk firm and resisting. It was part of the gymnastic science among the ancients; the athletes practised it both after severe exertion to refresh the organs, and as a preliminary to strenuous effort. A wrestler instinctively takes a deep inspiration, and holds it when he is about to engage. A man plunging into heavy seas does the same. Physically, the holding of the breath indicates sharp resolution. But it may be easily overdone. The athletes soon became examples of vicious gymnastics. Done moderately it is inspiriting; it will cure a fit of yawning, and, as it fills all the air-vessels, it used to be thought, and is, perhaps, serviceable in cases of lung-disease. Nevertheless the ancients understood that it could be hurtful to respiration, and they accused it of producing aneurisms. The daily repetitions of it in rapid 'spurts' under strong excitement, while a part of the frame is not in full corresponding activity, cannot benefit the arterial system; if it is injurious to respiration and circulation, it must be obnoxious to the heart. Yet it is possible to train men so that the respiratory power required by rowing shall increase largely, and help to fit them for their work. A judicious course of running does more than anything else to 'open the chest'; for running does not disturb, but deepens respiration, and is the proper handmaid of rowing. Mr. Maclaren complains

that the customary morning run has been discontinued, and on the ground that it 'takes it out of a man'; upon which he remarks: 'In plain and simple truth, the strength of a man and his respiratory capacity also, will be in proportion to what he does take out of himself by exertion. The more rapidly a man wears down the tissues of the body by properly regulated exertion, the greater will be their strength and serviceability, the greater will be their bulk and consistency, the greater the functional capacity in every way in which function can be legitimately performed; because the action of the several systems of the body are so perfectly in accord, that the very process which causes the destruction also accomplishes the reproduction.' Of course, this must be regulated by the individual capacity to repair as quickly as he wastes; Mr. Maclaren is addressing a modern boating eight, who can command the increase of vitality with every increase of natural exertion.

It is on the subject of dieting that professional trainers are so mysteriously profound in their wisdom, and he is unfortunate who falls into their hands without having some dietetic principles founded on his own experience. They commonly made a clean sweep of all one's previous habits. Few will tolerate eggs, or, if they do, they allow of the yolks only. Some are for beef, some for mutton, some for roast, some for broiled; as a rule they have salt, and sigh with their victim when he craves for beer. A private trainer promises you a hearty innings, by and by when you have finished your task. After that performance you may resume your habit of smoking, and are presumed to have fairly earned your wine; while training, your habits and animal cravings are disregarded—your second nature goes in irons. The restriction in the matter of tobacco is right enough, but Mr. Maclaren says: 'I hold it to be foreign from the purpose of training,

suddenly or greatly to change a man's habits in anything, and especially in such as notably affect the nervous system.' I find in *The Athlete* for 1866, just published, remarks to the same effect. The chief danger of training consists in the sudden adoption of new dietetic rules, to relinquish them and fall as suddenly back upon old habits when the strain upon physical endurance is over. The charm which is to be found in asceticism caused the imposed privations to seem sternly agreeable ; and men who train will deny themselves many harmless things, as friars and fakirs do, in the belief that they are acting virtuously, and are earning the future reward of a plenitude of indulgences. The gradations from and towards our ordinary habits, of which Mr. Maclaren speaks, may be rigorously observed, but it is a question whether men who do not live, by comparison, austerely, should ever train at all. The gradations from a friar's crust to alderman's fare will hardly be taken step by step in the face of the temptations besetting the appetite of a 'modern athlete.' Mr. Maclaren is nowhere treasonable to rowing as an art. The philosophical tendency of his book is to prove that any exercise undertaken exclusively is of small advantage to the frame and is done in error, if the true aim of exercise be to develop bodily strength and fitness for all forms of manly work. Rowing, running, boxing, fencing, or hunting, or cricketing will do this, when combined with gymnastics, that is general exercise. But men who go into training merely for one determined object forget the principle. I hope that Mr. Maclaren will be induced to publish a popular book on gymnastics. Directions upon self-training are very much wanted from a trustworthy guide, who is able both to point out the uses of training for the health of the people and the benefit of the state, and to show how a serviceable system of training should be conducted.

'SAINT PAUL': A Poem.[1] By Frederic H. Myers. London and Cambridge: Macmillan and Co.

Poems on sacred themes are too much like the modern pulpit sermon, wanting in spiritual fervency and homely directness. They refresh severe recollections of the bondage of the pew. An exception is rare, because lyrical energy is rare, without which a religious poem can have no vitality. The poem, *Saint Paul*, by Mr. Myers, is a signal exception to this melancholy rule. It is in the form of a monologue of the Apostle, who does not preach, but meditates, as 'in the hollow of his heart,' giving utterance in various moods to the intense aspiration, the fiery belief, which animated him for his work. It breathes throughout the spirit of St. Paul, and with a singular stately melody of verse. The lines are rhymed fours, alternating eleven and ten syllables: what we call the accent is on the first syllable of each line invariably. The structure of the verse is German, but we have adopted it for the last twenty years. The paucity of dissyllable rhymes in our tongue, and the iteration of participle terminations, rendered vulgar by long service, to which we are reduced, make it objectionable, unless when a peculiar effect of music is required to suit a grave subject. German, on the other hand, is redundant in dissyllables, and rich in rhymes for them. German verse falls naturally into hendecasyllable lines, whether rhymed or not; but when these recur closely, as in German dramatic verse, they are sleepy to my ear. The five-feet iambic line nods, and the alternating rhymed lines should have, I think, a wakeful regular emphasis on the opening

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, January 1868.

syllable, commencing either with a trochee or the dactyl foot, which Mr. Myers has used with remarkable skill, and a dignity unwavering to the end. The following lines will show that he is a master of the form of verse he has chosen, and what fulness of poetic expression he can throw into it. They are printed as it pleases him to have them :—

'She as one wild, whom very stripes enharden,
leapt many times from torture of a dream,
shrank by the loathly olives of the garden,
groves of a teacher, and Ilyssus' stream;

'then to their temple Damaris would clamber,
high where an idol till the dawn was done
bright in a light and eminent in amber
caught the serene surprises of the sun.

'Thence the strong soul whom never power can pinion,
sprang with a wail into the empty air,
thence the wide eyes upon a hushed dominion
looked in a fierce astonishment of prayer:

'looked to Hymettus and the purple heather,
looked to Peiræus and the purple sea,
blending of waters and of waves together,
winds that were wild and waters that were free.'

The lines are, perhaps, pardonably alliterative. The sense of beauty was doubtless alive in the irresistible orator who is made to speak here. But his extreme cultivation and daily experience of the power of words to persuade and excite would not have led him into lackadaisical alliteration and mellifluous excursions, as in this verse :—

'What was their sweet desire and subtle yearning,
lovers and ladies whom their song enrols?
Faint to the flame which in my breast is burning,
less than the love with which I ache for souls.'

There is a temporary 'truce between the flesh and soul' of the Paul of the poet in some other lines that I might quote. Yet in the first verse of the poem Paul is made to say,—

'Io with no winning words I would entice you.'

This is of the right temper, but the assertion should have been better maintained. As it is Paul himself who speaks, the dominant impression we have of him is jealously sensitive of any contrast, however slight; and when we consider the character of the speaker, and of the audiences he best loved to address and brood over, we feel that a charge of dramatic unfitness may here and there be founded against the poet.

His imagery is usually just, at times noble.

'John, than which man a grander and a greater
not till this day has been of woman born,
John like some iron peak by the Creator
fired with the red glow of the rushing morn.'

'A *grander* and a greater': the epithet belongs entirely to nineteenth-century journals, shouting praises of their favourite public men; but the image is splendidly characteristic and permanent. In justice to Mr. Myers, I make an extract of one of the shorter meditations, an example of purity in composition as in conception :—

'Great were his fate who on the earth should linger,
sleep for an age and stir himself again,
watching Thy terrible and fiery finger
shrivel the falsehood from the souls of men.

'Oh that thy steps among the stars would quicken!
oh that thine ears would hear when we are dumb!
many the hearts from which the hope shall sicken,
many shall faint before thy kingdom come.

'Lo for the dawn (and wherefore wouldst thou screen it?)
lo with what eyes, how eager and alone,
seers for the sight have spent themselves, nor seen it,
kings for the knowledge, and they have not known.'

It is not a poem written for popularity in any direction. The religious world, which 'thrills to the tireless music of a psalm,' as psalms have been versified, with improvements, since the days of Sternhold and Hopkins, may be alarmed at the presence of poetry. Those who take Fichte's view of Paul will find too much of the great convert; and those to whom he is a beacon of will, active devotion, and zeal, will object that there is little evidence of the second light of Christian worship to be discovered in it; while the band of harmonious doubters will ask why an old song should be set to a modern tune. The author has written to please himself. I have cited what are to my taste blots in his work; but as one loving poetry wherever I can find it, and of any kind, I have to thank him.

'REMINISCENCES OF A SEPTUAGENARIAN FROM 1802 TO 1815.'[1] By Emma Sophia, Countess Brownlow. London: Murray.

The high-bred plain manner of the writing of this book makes it pleasurable to read. As a *mémoire pour servir* it is valueless, for it tells nothing that is new. But it revives impressions of famous times and persons, and it may serve for an English model of the class of book, whether containing original matter or not. 'I am now an old woman,' the writer says, 'and having lived in stirring times from my youth, and most of my contemporaries having dropped around me, I am also an old chronicle, with the memories of bygone days still fresh in my mind.' Her earliest recollection is of the period immediately following the great mutiny of the fleet in 1797, when, as a very young child, she observed a procession of boats round the ships in Plymouth Sound, and was told that mutineers were being thus impressively flogged. Hearing that the toast of the men under punishment had been, 'A dark night, a sharp knife, and a bloody blanket,' she went to her bed for many a night in fear and trembling, as well she might. Art could not paint the contrast between those times and these more forcibly. She was too young, or too English to do perfect justice to Madame Récamier's beauty, when she saw her in 1802, walking in Kensington Gardens, dressed in the quasi-classical fashion which the republic had bequeathed to the ladies of the empire. Frenchwomen

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, February 1868, New Series, vol. iii. p. 229.

are never much to her taste. The exclamation, 'What a strange people the French are!' is implied generally, and sometimes expressed, and is as good a reminiscence of our old insular habit of sitting in judgement upon foreigners as could be. Her interview with Alexander in Paris, when he posed *en conquérant militaire* before Lady Castlereagh, puts the pragmatical Czar in an extremely comical light. His pedantic distinction of '*le courage moral, et le courage physique*,' on which he lays severe, though unctuous emphasis, as if to show that he is in possession of both high qualities, coupled with the appearance given him by his padded uniform, 'so tight round the waist and the arm-holes that he could not stand upright, and his arms did not touch his body,' is an effective caricature. Nor does Napoleon escape; but this easy pen cannot relate things ridiculous seen of him. He is merely heard of as flying from an incensed people in the form of a courier, with the round livery-hat, etc. If the writer's eye had been on him when in that garb, he would have figured preposterously enough. Yet he found tolerable favour in her sight at a review of his troops in the Place du Carrousel, before the first Consul had become a fat emperor. 'He was then thin, and his figure appeared to be *mesquin*; but how grand was his face, with its handsome features, its grave, stern, and somewhat melancholy expression! A face, once seen, never to be forgotten. It fascinated and acted on me like a rattlesnake,' etc. The Tories had not then triumphed over him. Full sympathy is given to the unfortunate Duchess D'Angoulême. The French ladies, in common with their lords, presumed to be critical of the restored royal family, and remarked on the duchess, '*Elle est maussade, Elle n'a pas de grâce, Elle est mal mise*,' the worst fault in a Frenchwoman's eyes, says the writer, adding that these heartless observations put her out of

all patience. But to make a parade of affliction in the presence of such remorseless eyes, after royal personages had come to be tested by their merits in France, was certainly imprudent, and one of various proofs that the Bourbons could not learn. French ladies do not like sorrow to persevere and show itself; and if a superior consents to appear 'cross-grained, ungraceful, and badly dressed,' on the plea of sorrowful antecedents, they will not excuse her for the sin against society. There are times, they think, for all things, and a time for wearing the livery of grief in public. Moreover, there were reasons why the horrors of her days in the Temple should not have been made visible in the aspect of the duchess at that season. The quick-witted observers saw a want of common energy and common policy in the absence of a presentable mask. Unlike us, the French refuse to render hearty allegiance to illustrious personages who cannot control, or who weakly indulge, the exhibition of their emotions. They may be morally wrong, but they imagine themselves to be right, and they have a right to demand that their superiors shall make some effort to conform to their customs. Lady Castlereagh receives a ceremonial visit from the Duchess de Courlande and her daughters, Madame de Lagan and Madame de Périgord, subsequently Duchesse de Dino, a very clever woman—Talleyrand's right hand when in London, who saved him from more than one portentous blunder. Madame de Périgord is described as 'dark, with magnificent eyes, highly rouged, and gaily dressed in a pink gown, and roses on her head.' Her mother imparted to her hostess that her daughter is very unhappy—'*elle vient de perdre son enfant*,' which is shocking to our native taste. 'Why she should have thought it necessary to bring her rouge, her pink dress, her roses, and her *tristesse*, to call on Lady Castlereagh, was not obvious, and I doubt

whether Lady Castlereagh was properly grateful to these ladies for their visit, for when they were gone, she said, "Emma, I am afraid we live in very bad company." Too true! but we could not help ourselves.' The complacency of the reflection is still characteristic of the English who enjoy and reprobate Paris. Madame de Périgord was simply fulfilling what she conceived to be a public duty. She had to pay a visit, and she did not choose—for it is not the habit of the country—to affect the eyes of others by presenting herself sombrely clad. Frenchwomen are, to say the least, as tender-hearted mothers as Englishwomen. She may have been *bien triste* for the loss of the child in spite of her rouge; nay, coming of a provident race, she may even on that occasion have thought it adviseable to lay on an extra dab of her artificial bloom, not supposing that she violated any laws of decency, but supposing quite the reverse. Why should she wear a suffering heart on her sleeve? Frenchwomen hold our English obtrusion of heavy mourning into society to be an offence, a selfish insistence on a private grief, evincing absolute want of consideration for others; in short, a piece of our national bad breeding. They enter society because society comforts them, as it will always comfort the most healthily impressionable natures. They are not of a temper to nurse their grief in secret, and it is a principle of taste with them to decide to abstract attention as black dots, and be out of harmony with the scenes they visit.

La Maréchale Ney does hurt to our English sentiments likewise. A few mornings after the death of Josephine at Malmaison, 'Lady Castlereagh and I called on Madame la Maréchale Ney, and, being admitted, were dismayed at finding her seated on a *canapé* in a recess at the end of the room, a table before her, on which was a flacon and a pocket-handkerchief, and she herself in floods of tears!

We felt very awkward, and were inclined to beat a retreat, but Madame la Maréchale did not appear in the least annoyed, and informed us that her grief was caused by the loss of Josephine, who had brought her up, and to whom she was much attached. The grief was all very natural, but not so to our English notions was the somewhat theatrical display of sorrow before two persons almost strangers.' Why not before strangers, when La Maréchale was not suffering from the instant shock, but after an interval of some days, was probably craving to talk of her lost friend, and hear kindly things spoken of Josephine? Which is the more amiable proceeding—to shut oneself up in gloom over a blow of this sort, or to open doors to the world, even unto strangers, assuming that they will bring phrases of sympathy wholesome for grief? It is appended charitably: 'And yet I believe the poor woman was really unhappy,' notwithstanding the arrangement of her flacon and pocket-handkerchief within reach to succour two of her more heavily-taxed senses! The Conservative sex in England preserves this habit of regarding Frenchwomen as a curious, too often as a degrading variety of the sex. What, *en revanche*, do Frenchmen say of them? Things not to be summed in '*mal mise*,' '*maussade*,' '*sans grâce*.' Madame de Girardin struck out one character which they take for a type of the average English lady. The irony of a desperate attempt at charity is doubtless a severe weapon on our side; but Frenchwomen are mistresses of the irony of utter scorn. To deserve it would be sad. To provoke it is unwise.

In company with Lady Castlereagh, the Septuagenarian witnessed the first trial of Ney, by court-martial of his brother generals. Her description of him revives our faith in the portraits extant: 'The president was

Marshal Jourdan, whose bâton had been taken at the battle of Vittoria, and sent to England.' He sat without his bâton, then :

'On his right sat Masséna, a spare, dark, ill-looking man with only one eye, the other having been shot by Bonaparte in a *chasse*. Besides these were Marshals Augereau, Duc de Castiglione, and Mortier, Duc de Treviso ; Generals Comte Villette, Claparède, and Maison, Governor of Paris. . . . With the exception of Mortier, they were certainly not a prepossessing set. When Ney, their former comrade, entered the court and was placed before them, their countenances were pitiable to behold ; they cast down their eyes, as if wanting the courage to look him in the face. Ney's manner was calm and simple, which gave him an unusual air of dignity. He was a strongly-built man, above the middle height, fair complexioned, with yellow hair and eyebrows, short nose, and long upper lip ; nothing distinguished, or even French, about him. In fact, he had much the look of an English yeoman '—with the dignity superadded. It was left to the peers of France to show the accord they were in with the feelings of the people by sending this man, the greatest hero of the empire, the most illustrious name in military chronicles for soldiery, stedfastness, and chivalry and valour, to execution—'to meet' (Countess Brownlow clearly expresses the opinion of high Toryism at that epoch, though it is not so sure that the Duke of Wellington more than submitted to the implacable verdict), 'to meet, and justly too, a traitor's doom.' The death of Ney was a blow to the Bourbons. So it may be deduced by admirers of them that their keen sense of justice was a ground of their destruction. They perished of their virtues.

With the exception of Talleyrand, the chief diplomatists are mentioned with approbation ; Pozzo di

Borgo being the favourite. He was Russian ambassador at the time when the allies were in occupation of Paris. He was, therefore, on equal terms with the British minister. Is there any truth in a story that Pozzo di Borgo was discovered by Lord Ponsonby in Constantinople, and sent over to our Foreign Office, strongly recommended to the attention of the Government as a young man certain to achieve eminent distinction in any diplomatic service, because of his possession of a peculiar genius in diplomacy, and that the young Corsican presented his letters, and was allowed an interview with a minister, and that he some time after received an appointment to a subordinate clerk's post valued at £200 per annum ; which act of experimental condescension precipitated Pozzo di Borgo out of this country more speedily than if his lordship's toe had dislodged him, after one brief national ejaculation from the summit of Shakespeare's cliff ? The story is told, though it is questionable whether it has been seen in print ; and if the story is true, one would like to know who was the British minister, and with what sort of greeting they met in Paris and in London. With something, one can fancy, of the quiet smile interchanged by Frederick the Great and the general he had handed over to the Austrian service to cause him big perplexities, when they met after the wars in which they grew old.

MR. ROBERT LYTTON'S POEMS [1]

The task of criticising a collection of the poems of one who has written much without having yet taken a distinct place in our poetic literature is singularly burdensome and thankless. For it will seem ungracious to praise with a reservation; it is always unpleasant to do so; and by subjecting his works to analysis, there is danger of conveying an idea among careless readers that none of them are of compact worth. But it is to a poet in Mr. Lytton's position that criticism, which is too often an impertinence, may really be of service. If his style and manner are not perfectly formed, he may listen to the judgement of a student of his craft; and if he will apprehend that he is not yet out of the fight, though he has won distinction, he will bear taking some rough blows in good humour, perhaps with profit. That he has a steady and a large ambition is shown by the number and by the improving quality of his publications. That he has hitherto failed to create enthusiasm for his poetic gifts must also, I think, be said, notwithstanding his popularity and merit. He has gained the public ear, but he has not gained the entire approval of those by whom enduring fame is given. The attempt to criticise him, therefore, without seeming to be guilty of what is called carping criticism—in other words, without seeking to discover how it is that he either offended the taste or missed the sympathy of this select class—would be a

[1] *Chronicles and Characters.* By the Hon. R. Lytton (Lord Lytton —'Owen Meredith'). London: Chapman and Hall, 1867. *Fortnightly Review*, June 1868, New Series, vol. iii. p. 658.

waste of labour, and not true kindness to him. I would not apply the critical lens to a very young writer, who expects to leap from publication to praise. He is sure to learn in time that it is the privilege of but two or three of his seniors. Nor would I venture to bring such a form of criticism to bear on the poems of Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Browning. What they are they will be in spite of me, and of their kind their poems are incomparably excellent. Poets like these must be studied by the light of their own manifested powers. They have subjected their faults, and made them peculiarities or characteristics of their work, springing originally from penetrative insight, from imaginative complexity of perception, or from defective or superabundant energy of expression. They are to themselves 'both law and impulse'—the flower of this generation of English poets; and as no man of science will take up a flower to make it a theme for the exposition of his peculiar taste in natural objects, so will no one, seriously estimating the value and the reach of criticism, presume to discuss the compositions of accomplished poets for the purpose of stating that they could have pleased him better. At any rate, if they are not perfect, no scolding will cure them, and it has been tried hard on Mr. Browning, who could scarcely have known anything of the breadth of his influence over his countrymen until he found himself surrounded by imitators, and saw them set above their master. Mr. Lytton ranks at present with the intermediate class of poets; writers much too strong to be injured by criticism; capable of delivering it themselves, and upon themselves; and the mould of whose work is still plastic. In a modest preface to the *Chronicles and Characters*, he claims 'a patient perusal as a preliminary to any final judgement of a work which has occupied nearly seven years of his life.' It is a protest against the 'I like' and 'I don't

like ' of summary reviewers, and an invitation to criticism. Reviewers of poetry are always able men—able to express their opinions—and between heavy puffs and contemptuous notices, the public gains from them in the end some approximate idea of a poet's value. But they rarely speak of his aims and of the indication of great and good work to come from him ; and in their business of interpreting public opinion to the public, they assume too broadly that they have the right to throw him aside if he shall not have pleased their private tastes.

> 'Suus cuique attributus est error :
> Sed non videmus manticae quod in tergo est.'

They might remember this sound and wholesome critical precept, even though they should suppose themselves to be dealing with a Suffenus. We have not so many men of genius or of cleverness who are anxious to build up a name in letters, that it is necessary to turn an amazed frown on them when they produce an ambitious book not quite after the prevailing fashion ; nor is our modern literature so rich in good things that we can afford to leave its growth to the fatness of the soil, and cherish only what delights a dilettante appetite. Goethe held, even in Germany, that art should be cultivated. The defenders of such literary gateways as we possess resemble, too often, the old Austrian out-station gendarmes, who used frequently to examine a passport by reading it upside down, and then declare it imperfect and unsatisfactory. No one would complain if they were zealous and acute keepers of the way. The grievance, to men feeling these matters a grievance, is that they let in a multitude, and have now and then to chase them out again with shocking severity. I bear in mind one unfortunate, unmatched for a loyal ode or a British sentiment in portly verse, who as poet and sage (I refrain in

charity from writing down a famous name, now melancholy to look upon as an old football) was raised to the heights where idols sit, and nourished our nurseries and drawing-rooms, surely not in absolute contempt of their authority. Whether he beguiled, or forced, or, as they assert, crept through the reviewers' ranks, the vengeance of the gods that never cease kicking has been taken on him, and one cannot but accuse them of the double betrayal of a want of sensibility. And while this really representative bard of his country lived in the profound esteem of multitudes, Mr. Browning was continuing his struggle for recognition, much like 'the plants in mines' that his Paracelsus speaks of. So, though they have the importance of the weathercock to the sons of time, they are something less than infallible in pronouncing his verdicts. It cannot be otherwise with officials now acting as trumpets to the native literary appetites of their countrymen, and now undertaking to hammer a notion of things strange and new into them, after a process to which they have previously submitted. Mr. Browning's extraordinary gift of poetic humour does not, it is true, allow him to be put as a fair test of their general powers of discernment, which are beyond estimation; and seeing that they and their public are in close alliance, each in turn correcting and polishing the other, the individual may well consent to wither for their advancement. One marvels a little that any man happy enough to be independent of literature should, under these circumstances, pertinaciously issue volume upon volume in hot haste. Mr. Lytton's first volume, his *Clytemnestra*, with the minor poems attached to it, was full of high promise—'Incarcerate him and keep him away from the publishers' has been said of a young poet by one who knew the perils of an opening success. Had Mr. Lytton kept back his next volume for something approaching

to the prescribed Horatian term to which he has subjected his latest, he would not now be offering vastly superior work to experience the mortification of finding it less thankfully accepted. Ambition is a noble infirmity; but besides being careful to curb the incessant desire to gratify it, we must not forget that the perpetual strain of effort is the waste of power. Or, I should say, I think it holds in poetry that much writing wastes the powers. Publishing much is at least an evil that none will dispute. Those who cannot help themselves, and are in the chains, must do it. But those who are not should benefit from the pre-eminent advantage they enjoy. Prose is always ready to satiate the appetite for labour: they deal with it more than they will believe, and prose travels to limbo without a shriek. The road is wide for it in that direction. Prose strengthens the hand. It does not of necessity call up fictitious sentiments to inflate a conception run to languor. I allude especially to the habit of producing numberless minor poems on purely sentimental subjects. A large and noble theme has a framework that yields as much support as it demands. Lyrics yield none; and, when they are not spontaneous, they rob us of a great deal of our strength and sincerity. If they are true things coming of a man's soul, they are so much taken from him: if the reverse, they hurry him rapidly to waste. There should not be such a thing as a habit of lyrical composition. This effusion of song is not natural to us. The greatest of lyrists have the power but rarely, and if they published songs, and odes, and snatches only, their works would be remarkably contracted. In a stimulating season, when prompted by the passions of youth or of a generous sympathy, they give abundance; but that abundance does not make volumes—at least, not publishable volumes. A great lyrist (and we have one among us), inflamed by

the woes of an unhappy people throbbing for fulness of life and freedom, sings perforce ; but he has a great subject, and we do not see that it is his will which distinctly predominates in his verses. Shelley's lyrical pieces are few, considering the vigour of his gift of song ; and so are those of Burns, and of Campbell and Hood. Heinrich Heine added a new element to his songs and ballads : an irritant exile breathed irony into them, and shaped them into a general form and significance. He is the unique example of a man who made himself his constant theme, and he pursued it up to the time when he was rescued from his 'mattress-grave.' By virtue of a cunning art he caused it to be interesting while he lived. I feel the monotony of it begin to grow on me often now when I take up the Buch der Lieder, the Neuer Frühling, and the Romanzero. Goethe's songs were the fruits of a long life. He tells us how they sprang up in him, and I do not doubt of his singing as the birds sing ; but without irreverence it may be said that, in many cases, this was merely a self-indulgent mood to which German verse allured the highest of German poets. I love the larger number of them for his sake, not for their own. The Tuscan Giusti, one of the truest of modern lyrists, published very little. Alfred de Musset's songs, all of them exquisite, might be compassed in half a dozen pages of this review. In fact, it is from observation or meditation that poetry gets sinew and substance, and the practice of observing or meditating soon tames in poets the disposition to pour out verse profusely.

Mr. Lytton has published an excess of lyrical pieces. He is, I should say, an intellectual poet with a dramatic tendency, not lyrical. The design of the *Chronicles and Characters* would argue for him the possession of a mind *contentus paucis lectoribus*, but there is still a slight *ad*

captandum flavour in some of the minor poems and their metres which detracts from the merits of the volumes as a whole. He conceived possibly that variety and lightness were wanted to relieve the severe intellectual pressure. He might have trusted to his natural strength without any fears of the sort. I will first touch on his poetical qualifications for his work, and find such fault as I can. The sterner bent of his imagination does not deprive him of a vivid sense of beauty, or of warm colours to paint it in. The apparition of the Lydian queen to Gyges, in the poem of 'Gyges and Candaules,' is richly painted:—

'At length, deep-down the opposing gallery,
From out the long-drawn darkness flash'd a light;
And, peering from his purple privacy,
He spied, with red gold bound and robed in white,
Sole as the first star in a sleepy sky,
That while men watch it, grows more large and bright,
The slow queen sweeping down the lucid floor;
And in her hand a silver lamp she bore.

'Before her, coming, floated a faint fear
Into his heart who watch'd her whiteness move
Swan-soft along the lamp-lit marble clear,
And, lingering o'er her in the beams above,
The wing'd and folded shadows shift and veer,
Her airy follower—'

The alliteration here is subordinate to the charm of the verse. But what of lines like these?—

'And first self-scorn shut all his sullen sense
Within himself: but soon the odours sweet,
Streamed from the misty lamps, and that intense
Rich-scented silence, seeming to entreat
Some sound to ease its sumptuous somnolence,
Lured out his thoughts—'

The fifth line is pure sibilation. Nor does Mr. Lytton pursue this art in liquids or in single consonants only. The reader is tempted to think that the poet is trying to get force of expression from the violent iteration of similar sounds, and that he beats a gong instead of sweeping a lyre.

Since Cupid with Lely's 'Campaspe played at cards for kisses,' and

> 'An Austrian army awfully arrayed
> Boldly by battery besieged Belgrade,'

one would have supposed that this old outworn net of the Sirens had small chance of catching a poet. The curious thing, too, is that vowels, naturally and pardonably seductive to those who would produce melody in verse attract Mr. Lytton but slightly. It is as if barbarous jewellery sometimes exercised more influence over him than charm of tones. Yet he has a vivid sense of rhythmical beauty. His versification of M. Auguste Dozon's Recueil of Serbski Pesme is admirable for grace and tenderness: see 'The Battle of Kossovo,' 'The Malady of Moïo,' and minor pieces. He has rendered them with a hand in perfect affinity with their simple poetic charm. Here is one:—

> He. 'And art thou wed, my beloved?
> My belovèd of long ago.
> She. I am wed, my belovèd, and I have given
> A child to this world of woe.
> And the name I have given my child is thine;
> So that, when I call to my little one,
> The heaviness of this heart of mine
> For a little while may be gone.
> For I say not—"Hither, hither my son!"
> But—"Hither, my love, my beloved."'

A girl replies to her lover, repeating his images :—

> 'By the sweet heavens, young lover !
> No odour from the orange have I stole ;
> Nor have I robbed for thee,
> Dearest, the amber dower
> Of the building bee,
> From any hollow tower
> In oaken bole :
> But if on this poor breast thou dost discover
> Fragrance of such sweet power,
> Trust me, O my belovèd and my lover,
> 'Tis not of basil, nor the immortal flower,
> But from a virgin soul.'

Some exquisite love-poems, to be found in Talvi's collection, which won Goethe's enthusiastic praise even in the garb she gave them, are missing in Mr. Lytton's volume. It would be a boon to the language if he would add them to another edition of his Serbski Pesme. He has shown—and it is not a common feat—that he can convey almost uninjured their delicate passion, their soft mournful fervour, and the varying colours distinguishing them above the love-songs of any other race. None but a poet keenly sensible of simplicity could have reproduced them. This makes it the more astonishing that he should still occasionally strike a false note in his lyrics. There is appended to the 'Jacqueline of Holland,' republished in the new volumes, a dirge melody, bearing perhaps a burden of relationship to Webster. A little care bestowed on it would have made it wholly beautiful.

> 'Pluck the pale sky-colour'd periwinkle,
> That haunts in dewy courts and shuns the light ;
> Gather dim violets and the wild eyebright,
> That green old ruin'd walls doth oversprinkle ;

> And cull, to keep her company
> In death, rue, sage, and rosemary,
> And flowery thyme from the faint bed o' the bee ;
> For they, when summer 's o'er, make savour sweet
> To cherish winter : strew black-spikèd clove
> And mint, and marjoram, to make my love
> A misty fragrance for her winding sheet,
> And pull not up red tulips, nor the rose,
> For these be flaunting flowers that live i' the world's gay shows.'

Our native eyebright is not characteristically a climber of ruins, and the 'faint' bed of the bee seems a sentimental intrusion (I find also 'pert' violet an odd epithet for a modest flower in another poem); but the charge of a lapse of emotional simplicity falls on the epithet 'misty.' To entreat kind souls to make his love 'a misty fragrance for her winding sheet' is to paint and not to sing a sorrow, and diverts lyrical pathos, much as if a horn were to air itself in two or three fantastic twirls in the Dead March in Saul. Description has at once taken the place of the voice of grief. In point of melody and natural colour, the 'Dirge of Jacqueline' had the true quality of a dirge, though I should say that the last line, by its length and summary, renders it too conclusive, too final to the ear for grief. It appears to close the vault, leaving bones only and a good character within.

The poet has habituated himself to lyrical composition so strongly that the 'Opis and Arge,' in which is found the key-note of his *Chronicles and Characters*, is set to a series of lyrical pieces. Now the whole collection of poems here is hung on an intellectual design ; necessarily the indicatory poems are surcharged with it. The virgins of Herodotus are tuned to sing thoughts that are not flexible in the lighter measures, and a strange contrast is produced by the alternations of their entangled strains

with the admirably smooth and clear descriptive rhymed lines of the poet. The thoughts are pregnant, but one has to seize the lyric bodily and dissect it to get at them.

'Listen, sister!
For my spirit on the throng
Of the ages rushes strong.
When the strong archetypal moulders
Of mortal clay.
Have bequeath'd to unborn beholders
The forms that stay
Fix'd and fast
In the flux of time,
For man's thought, cast
In a mould sublime,
And the few fine spirits first needed
To build up the walls of the world
(From the protoplast freshly proceeded)
Having, each from his fortress, unfurl'd
The standard of man's realm, made fuller
For all men by one man alone,—
Over marble, or music, or colour,
Or language,—are gather'd and gone
From the sun's sight, like stars of the morning
Lost in level enlargements of light,
Where the world needs no longer their warning
Or witness to steer through the night,
Then the men that come after, not equal
In height, but more spacious in span,' etc.

The idea grows darkly visible, but how much better it would have stood out in lines of plain volume like those which are given to picturesque description :—

'The sparkle of a golden sandal shined
One moment on the mountain peak. A white
And vaporous hem of eddying vesture, drawn
Across a saffron-colour'd cliff from sight
Slowly, left all along the mountain lawn,

Among the tawny grass and camomile,
A tremulous streak, soon quench'd in day's strong smile
Of waving splendour. Then those mariners all
Rose up amazed, and drew out of the deep
The hookèd anchor, and drove out to sea
Their little bark beneath a shadowy shore.
But while they set the sail and plied the oar,
Full-lighted on the heavenly mountain wall
Leapt the large sunrise, and all around shook free
His flaming wings : when lo ! on every steep,
Wrapt with the aurorean vapour rolling high,
An august image stood, majestical,
With lifted arm, far off, 'twixt earth and sky.'

One has only to quote the finer passages to correct any transient unjust impression that a critical examination may produce.

' Life's image, born of the brain
In the form which the hand hath fashioned,
Shall for ever unmarr'd retain
Life's moment the most impassioned ;
All power that in act hath been
Put forth, shall perish never ;
And life's beauty once felt and seen
Is life beautified for ever.'

Here the lines are crisper, and the thought clearer to vision, but the same criticism is applicable to them, I think.

The *Chronicles and Characters* are a legend of the ages, differing from M. Victor Hugo's, inasmuch as Mr. Lytton's aim, when he keeps to it rigorously, is less to exhibit the gradual development of the deeper and sweeter nature of humanity than to make note of mental progress and the growth of human culture. Hugo starts with Eve and ends with the judgement trump ; Mr.

Lytton from mythology downward to the present time, over which he pronounces a short optimistic sermon by way of epilogue :—

> 'Rejoice in the good that God gives
> By the hand of beneficent Ill,
> And be glad that He leaves to our lives
> Means to make them heroical still.'

Hugo does not touch on Neoplatonism or the philosophies. He finds themes in the Old Testament and the New, and in the New it is Christ raising Lazarus. Divine love active on behalf of humanity, and the hardness of the priests :—

> 'Ceux qui virent cela crurent en Jésus-Christ.
> Or, les prêtres, selon qu'au livre il est écrit,
> S'assemblèrent, troublés, chez le préteur de Rome ;
> Sachant que Christ avait ressuscité cet homme,
> Et que tous avaient vu le sépulcre s'ouvrir,
> Ils dirent : "Il est temps de le faire mourir." '

Mr. Lytton ventures on the Passion of the Cross, and an intellectual Satan claiming his place among the progressive steps of man as Prince of this World, addressing the Angel of the Watch thus :—

> 'Look on me. I am
> Man's mind's eternal protest against Law,
> Man's life's eternal protest against Love.
> A time there may be, though it must be far,
> When man, by knowledge reconciled to Law
> In things material, shall convert to good
> All that for ages I have made to them
> Material evil.
> 'When man no more
> My work provides, thine own shall lack provision ;
> Whose task on earth is but the consequence
> Of my procedure ; temporary both.'

Hugo does not look on evil with the same reposeful sentiment. His Ratbert is hard and horrible. His mountain Momotombo has a word to say against men—or their priests. He paints black deadly black, and touches it with no light lancet-point. With the exception of the powerful 'Irene' in the Byzantine episodes, Mr. Lytton shows the intellectual temper towards the devil and his doings—'the only critic of God's works who does not praise them'; and when he abandons that, he is, by the impulse of his mind, dramatic. The philosopher insists to escape being compromised by a positive violent condemnation of 'beneficent Ill,' unless he is forced to it by some character bare of all suggestive humours, unprovocative of the sedater irony he loves, though always without irreverence to indulge. It will be seen that his 'Legend of the Ages' has a distinct mark of its own. If he fails, it is not in conception; and he fails in execution only from having attempted more than was possible for poet to accomplish. He has taken the widest field he could select, and made it as difficult to himself as ingenuity could devise to build up a complete work in it. There could have been no artistic prompting in him, for example, to write the mediæval pieces ('Fair Yoland with the Yellow Hair,' 'Trial by Combat') after the mediæval manner. I presume so, for these poems are positive failures. Compare them with Mr. Morris's 'Haystack in the Floods' in his first volume of poems. This low-toned mediævalism, depending upon colour, monotony, and mist, must spring out of a poet's nature, and is not to be seized in passing. Mr. Lytton has not the archaic tongue. The mediævalism of Hugo's prodigious combat between Roland and Oliver and of his Aymerillot, is based on huge outlines and the childlike simplicity of the filling in. No paladin of the army of the great Charles

being willing to oblige him by taking Narbonne, Aymerillot, a modest little fellow of twenty years, without plume or scutcheon, undertakes the business single-handed :—

> 'Charles, plus rayonnant que l'archange céleste,
> S'écria : "Tu seras, pour ce propos hautain,
> Aymery de Narbonne et comte palatin,
> Et l'on te parlera d'une façon civile.
> Va fils !" Le lendemain Aymery prit la ville.'

It is a veritable *coup de tonnerre du moyen âge*. At the close of the fifth day of tough fighting on the borders of the Rhone, Oliver proposes a settlement of their dispute to Roland :—

> '"Roland, nous n'en finirons point.
> Tant qu'il nous restera quelque tronçon au poing,
> Nous lutterons ainsi que lions et panthères.
> Ne vaudrait-il pas mieux que nous devinssions frères ?
> Écoute, j'ai ma sœur, la belle Aude au bras blanc ;
> Épouse-la."
> "Pardieu ! je veux bien," dit Roland.
> "Et maintenant buvons, car l'affaire était chaude."
> C'est ainsi que Roland épousa la belle Aude.'

This is the breath of primitive mediævalism. It would have been wiser and, I think, more in harmony with Mr. Lytton's design, had he also gone to legendary sources for this feature, instead of tasking invention and colouring his work in a known style that he was in no way bound to undertake. From the eleventh to the thirteenth century, at least, there were plenty of salient legends if he thought fit to shun the fountain of Malory and the Arthurian cycles ; and there was Froissart for a guide, and the Provençal and Spanish romances to choose from. These poems and 'Last Words,' a

representation of the sentimentalism of modern days, discredit his executive power, as would be the case with that of almost any poet who attempted as much as he has done in these seven hundred pages of verse.

'The Dead Pope,' 'The Duke's Laboratory,' 'Adolphus, Duke of Gueldres,' are scenic illustrations of the idea in progress. 'The Scroll and its Interpreters' keeps close to the thought.

> 'One asks me why
> Is Evil everywhere ? and I reply
> That everywhere there may be growth of Good.
> Would I forego that growth, even if I could ?
> By no means.'

It is the learned Jew, Ben Enoch, speaking. But the poem contains a great deal of the writer's studious mind, and deserves an attentive perusal. The concluding couplet, given to Time passing in the silence after the interlocutors have exchanged farewells, does not compliment us for the pains we have been taking, and is not wanted.

It is in the 'Siege of Constantinople' that he shows his strength in perfection. I object to the terminating line,—

> 'In this way Venice took Constantinople,'

which reminds us of the 'C'est ainsi que Roland,' etc., and does not come well at the close of a long rhymed chronicle, though it should be after the old chronicler's fashion. He is a master of the narrative rhymed ten-syllable couplet. He can be smooth, crisp, and terse in it, flowing and redundant at will. The narrative hurries or is retarded for natural scenic passages, taking its course like a full-sailed imperial barge, little impeded by reason of its rich lading. It is, in fact, a

fine epical poem of the two sieges, with blind old Enrico Dandolo for the central figure, among crowds of Oriental barbarians and the chivalry of Europe. More vigorous and better sustained narrative verse it would be hard to find. It is as distinctively Mr. Lytton's as the simpler style of the 'Jason' is peculiar to Mr. Morris, and without mannerism. For an example of flexibility, the catalogue of the knights marshalled under Dandolo may be viewed as without parallel for spirited conciseness in this exceedingly difficult form of verse, which more than any other tempts to distension and flatness. He has caught at times something of the simple graphic manner distinguishing the chronicler of St. Louis' crusade; but no effort of imitation is anywhere visible. The descriptions of scenery, battles, pomp, and splendour are dwelt on as the circumstances prompt them, and the result, in the reader's mind, is a sense of completeness and finish only attainable by poets that have an abounding energy and have learnt to command it. Mr. Lytton is one of the few poets who can narrate. The press of narrative holds in check his tendency to dramatise, which is perhaps attributable to a poetic reaction against a rather too despotic intellectual ascendancy. I will give one example of it from the 'Thanatos Athanatou,' when the Angel of the Watch, to terminate his colloquy with Satan, says :—

'Put forth thy hand.

SATAN

Where art thou ? feebly sounds
Thy voice, vain angel : strong in word, but weak
In act to hold what now I seize. Thy voice
Floats to me fainter, fainter ! and thy form
Fades further, further, further, from my ken.
Thou fliest, cherub !

THE ANGEL

Self-deceiver, no !
Here, where I was, I am ; and what I held
I hold. But thee thine ever-changing place
Hath changed already. Prince of passing ills,
Already in the Past thy footstep strays,
Seeking the future.'

The effective instance of a subtle idea put in action will show what I mean, and it is proof of an artistic nature that it is never allowed to obtrude on his narrative verse. The allocutions are not prolonged ; the dialogues are short and emphatic. Description is rich and simple, and there are no hints of a depth beyond the fathoming of vulgar sight. 'Licinius,' written in the same verse as the 'Siege,' is more epigrammatic, aims higher, and is not generally so flowing, for there Mr. Lytton seeks to give the shadow of a meaning behind the visible one, and passages of very splendid description are here and there marred by dislocated lines, and a—to my mind —objectionable style of painting in catalogue, *ex. gr.*—

'Evening. At morn the battle.'

The rejection of the verb does not give stateliness, but a twang of pertness oddly discordant with the theme. The opening of 'Licinius' is a contrast to the poet's ease of manner when he is breathing the robuster air of the chroniclers. These first lines have the effect of stammering :—

'It was the fall and evening of a time
In whose large daylight, ere it sank, sublime
And strong, as bulks of brazen gods, that stand,
Bare-bodied, with helm'd head and armèd hand,
All massive monumental thoughts of hers
Rome's mind had mark'd in stately characters
Against the world's horizon.'

One cannot say that the lines are confused ; but

they seem to hesitate and come uncertainly, not as introductory lines should come. Further on they are exceedingly vigorous. The conception of 'Licinius' is clear and full of grandeur. The stout old Roman preparing to give battle for the gods of his country and his ancestry is finely imagined; but against the objection that this tough veteran of the wars, of a purely Conservative Pagan spirit, should be found antedating a Christian dream, in which Apollo speaks philosophy, and Love — our frank friend Cupid — becomes transformed to a divinity worthy of presiding over modern tea-tables, I can only oppose the plea that the writing is magnificent, and the poem too good to be over-shadowed, were the objections ten times more forcible. This also may be said of the tale of Candaules' queen, evidently not one of the later pieces of Mr. Lytton's composition, as I suppose the 'Siege of Constantinople' to be. The poem should be revised. To find among a succession of beautiful verses one like the following, in which it would almost be thought that the poet having preferred the luscious to the severe method of treatment—the style of the Eve of St. Agnes to that of the Laodamia—prudently tempered it with a dash of the grotesque, is astonishing :—

> 'Last she with listless long-delaying hand
> The golden sandals loosed from her white feet,
> And loosed from her warm waist the golden band.
> The milk-white tunic slided off its sweet
> Snow-surfaced slope, and left half-bare her bland
> Full-orbèd breast. But in the fainting heat
> Of his bewilder'd heart and fever'd sight,
> Here Gyges in the curtain groaned outright.'

Keats, when his hero is in a like condition of ineffable anguish, says, Porphyro grew faint, and has been reproached for it as for a bit of simpering unmanliness.

The miserable Gyges may certainly have sounded this loud note of warning to all the peeping Toms of after time: it is but too easy for the reader to comprehend his feelings, but in what a line does the poet crave sympathy for the sufferer. Very little labour is required to render this poem enjoyable throughout. The voluptuousness of colouring proper to the subject is pervaded with tragic sentiment, and we are made conscious that the fair woman, in the supreme beauty of her nakedness, is being outraged, and will have blood for it. 'Crœsus and Adrastus' claims higher critical praise for its workmanship, and is simple and pathetic. In both these poems a good story is well told.

The same excellent narrative faculty is shown in the 'Apple of Life,' which shadows out a poem of old Oriental wisdom. It is the Brahminical legend transferred to the courts of King Solomon. The Hindoo king slaughters his fair unfaithful wife, but Solomon dissolves into wise sentences. Voluminous lines are well suited to the pompous gravity of the Eastern tale, with its semi-transparent mysticism and rich descriptive passages :—

'In cluster, high lamps, spices, odours, each side
Burning inward and onward from cinnamon ceilings, down distances vast,
Of voluptuous vistas, illumined deep halls, through whose silentness pass'd
King Solomon sighing: where columns colossal stood, gathered in groves
As the trees of the forest in Libanus—there where the wind, as it moves
Whispers "I, too, am Solomon's servant!" huge trunks hid in garlands of gold,
On whose tops the skilled sculptors of Sidon had granted men's gaze to behold

How the phœnix that sits on the cedar's lone summit 'mid
fragrance and fire,
Ever dying and living, hath loaded with splendours her
funeral pyre ;
How the stork builds her nest on the pine-top ; the date from
the palm-branch depends ;
And the shaft of the blossoming aloe soars crowning the life
which it ends.
And from hall on to hall, in the doors, mute, magnificent
slaves, watchful-eyed,
Bow'd to earth as King Solomon pass'd them.'

The king gives the apple of life to his beautiful Shulamite. She in turn hurries to present it to her lover, Prince Azariah, and calls to him very musically :—

' Ope the door, ope the lattice ! Arise ! Let me in, O my
love ! It is I,
Thee the bride of King Solomon loveth. Love, tarry not.
Love, shall I die
At thy door ? I am sick of desire. For my love is more
comely than gold,
More precious to me is my love than the throne of a king
that is old.
Behold, I have pass'd through the city, unseen of the watch-
men. I stand
By the doors of the house of my love till my love lead me
in by the hand.'

But the author's strength is best exhibited by some extracts from the ' Siege of Constantinople,' where he has a fuller theme and larger space. Here is a scene in the court of Alexius, the usurper :—

' At the Emperor's right hand
Tracing upon the floor with snaky wand
Strange shapes, was standing the astrologer
And mystic, Ishmael the son of Shur,

A swarthy, lean, and melancholy man,
With eyes in caverns, an Arabian,
Who seem'd to notice nothing, save his own
Strange writing on the floor before the throne.
At the Emperor's feet, half-naked and half-robed,
With rivulets of emeroldes that throbb'd
Green fire as her rich breathings billow'd all
Their thrill'd and glittering drops, crouch'd Jezraäl,
The fair Egyptian, with strange-colour'd eyes
Full of fierce change and somnolent surprise.
She, with upslanted shoulder leaning couch'd
On one smooth elbow, sphynx-like, calm, and crouch'd,
Tho' motionless, yet seem'd to move,—its slim
Fine slope so glidingly each glossy limb
Curved on the marble, melting out and in
Her gemmy tunic, downward to her thin
Clear ankles, ankleted with dull pale gold,
Thick gushing thro' a jewell'd hoop, down roll'd
All round her, rivers of dark slumbrous hair,
Sweeping her burnish'd breast, sharp-slanted, bare,
And sallow shoulder.'

For a contrast take the description of the Venetian fleet passing down the Dardanelles, and coming within view of the Constantinople of the Lower Empire :—

'In his strong pines, adown the displaced deep,
Shoulders the Pelegrino,—half asleep,
With wavy fins each side a scarlet breast
Slanted. Hard by, more huge than all the rest—
Air's highest, water's deepest, denizen—
A citadel of ocean, thronged with men
That tramp in silk and steel round battlements
Of windy wooden streets, 'mid terraced tents
And turrets, under shoals of sails unfurl'd,—
That vaunting monster Venice calls "The World."

'And now is past each purple promontory
Of Sestos and Abydos, famed in story.

And now all round the deep blue bay arise
Into the deep blue air, o'er galleries
Of marble, marble galleries ; and lids
O'er lids of shining streets ; dusk pyramids
O'er pyramids ; and temple walls o'er walls
Of glowing gardens, whence white sunlight falls
From sleepy palm to palm ; and palace tops
O'ertopp'd by palaces. Nought ever stops
The struggling glory, from the time he leaves
His myrtle-muffled base, and higher heaves
His mountain march from golden-grated bower
To bronzen-gated wall,—and on, from tower
To tower, until at last deliciously
All melts in azure summer and sweet sky.
Then after anthem sung, sonorous all
The bronzen trumpets to the trumpets call ;
Sounding across the sea from bark to bark
Where floats the Wingèd Lion of St. Mark,
The mighty signal for assault.'

Domenico Tintoretto's painting of the storming of Constantinople by Venetians and crusaders in the hall of the Great Council of the Palazzo Ducale, together with the capture of Zara by Tintoretto, and of Cattaro by Vicentino, a strange confusion of red masts and long lances pushed by men-at-arms, and flying arrows and old engines of war, may have been in Mr. Lytton's vision when he wrote the vivid passage which succeeds :—

'Swift from underneath upspout
Thick showers of hissing arrows that down-rain
Their rattling drops upon the walls, and stain
The blood-streak'd bay. The floating forest groans
And creaks, and reels, and cracks. The rampart stones
Clatter and shriek beneath the driven darts.
And on the shores, and at the gates, upstarts,
One after one, each misshaped monster fell
Of creaking ram and cumbrous mangonel.

Great stones, down jumping, chop, and split, and crush
The rocking towers ; wherefrom the spearmen rush.
The morning star of battle, marshalling all
That movement massive and majestical,
Gay through the tumult which it guides doth go
The grand grey head of gallant Dandolo,
With what a full heart following that fine head—
Thine, noble Venice, by thy noblest led !
In his blithe-dancing turret o'er the sea,
Glad as the grey sea-eagle, hovers he
Through sails in flocks and masts in avenues.

'Pietro Alberti, the Venetian, whom
His sword lights, shining naked 'twixt his teeth
Sharp-gripp'd, through rushing arrows, wrapt with death,
Leaps from his ship into the waves ; now stands
On the soak'd shore ; now climbs with bleeding hands
And knees the wall ; now left, now right, swift, bright
Wild weapons round him whirl and sing ; now right,
Now left he smites.
'In clattering cataract
The invading host roll down. Disrupt, distract,
The invaded break and fly. The great church bells
Toll madly, and the battering mangonels
Bellow. The priests in long procession plant
The cross before them, passing suppliant
To meet the marching conquest.'

Historical scene-painting done with so broad and firm a hand is rare at any time, and greatly to be praised. The poem is maintained throughout at this elevated pitch, devoid of any sensible strain.

The valedictory lines of Thomas Müntzer to Martin Luther are also in conception and execution very good, and harmonious to the general design of the volumes. My personal distaste for broken metres, that lose their music in the attempt to symbolise the effects of an

operatic libretto, may make me unjust to the 'Opis and Arge,' and the scenic lyrics of 'Thanatos Athanatou,' and it seems to me that this last poem should not have had the heavy drag on it of the lengthened dialectical encounter of the rival Princes of Good and Evil. It might be divided into parts. But it is finely imagined, and, as an intellectual conception, a grand centre-piece.

MRS. MEYNELL'S TWO BOOKS OF ESSAYS [1]

The gift for talking well has been said to transcend excellent singing in charm. We can admit that the writing of good prose in our unschooled composite English is an achievement beyond any save the highest flight of song. Mrs. Meynell has practised on either instrument, poetry being, of course, her first love. To the metrical themes attempted by her she brings emotion, sincerity, a sufficient measure of the minstrel's skill, together with an exquisite play upon our finer chords, quite her own, not to be heard from another. Some of her lines have the living tremour in them. The poems are beautiful in idea as in grace of touch; and they are unambitious, born modest; they do not lend themselves to clamorous advocacy of their merits. 'Quid enim contendat hirundo cygnis?'—her verse has the swallow's wing and challenges none. It is in her essays that her singular powers have their range, and without sacrifice of the poet she is.

Readers with a turn for literature have noticed of late a column once weekly in the Autolycus basket of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, considering it princely journalism. Mrs. Meynell's second volume is her selection from these criticisms and essays, as was her foregoing from the series printed in the *National Observer*. They are small books, and they contain much substance, both to refresh and to instruct. But it is not as a quintessential extract that they commend themselves to us, though they are

[1] *The National Review*, August 1896. *The Rhythm of Life*, and *The Colour of Life*. (John Lane.)

full of matter. The essays have, in these days of the overflow, the merit of saying just enough on the subject, leaving the reader to think. They can be read repeatedly, because they are compact and suggestive, and at the same time run with clearness. The surprise coming on us from their combined grace of manner and sanity of thought, is like one's dream of what the recognition of a new truth would be. Conceivably the writer was fastidious to the extreme degree during the term of scholarship, but that is now shown only in a style having 'the walk of the Goddess'; and when she speaks her wise things, it is the voice of one standing outside the curtain of the Oracle, humbly among her hearers. She has no pretensions to super-excellence, however confirmed her distastes. Her rule of the μηδὲν ἄγαν has become the law of her nature, as it may be seen at a first reading.

Mrs. Meynell discountenances nimiety in any form, the much scorn, the shout of encomium, the exhibition of the copious vocabulary. Part of her education was influenced insensibly by one whom she respected for 'his gentle and implacable judgement'; and as he 'disliked violence chiefly because violence is apt to confess its own limits,' she received her guidance in criticism as in conduct. Her scorn, when it is roused, is lightly phrased, her wit glances, her irony is invisible, though it slays; and if she admires she withholds exclamations. Intemperateness, redundancy, the *ampoulé* and pretentious, are discarded by her, nor may her heroes be guilty. She cuts her way for herself through that wood to a precision never emphatic unless it be intentionally, for the signification; and this precision she contrives to render flexible, conversational even; she achieves the literary miracle of subordinating compressed choice language to grace of movement, an easy and pleasant flow until her theme closes. Her theme,

too, is held in hand, to be rolled out like the development of a sonnet, because of that same succinctness of idea inspiring to direct her equable delivery. The papers outside the descriptive and the critical are little sermons, ideal sermons—let no one uninstructed by them take fright at the title, they are not preachments ; they are of the sermon's right length, of about as long to read as the passage of a cathedral chant in the ear, and keeping throughout to the plain step of daily speech, they leave a sense of stilled singing on the mind they fill. In all her writing we read of a brain that has found its untrammelled medium for utterance, with stores to deliver. Necessarily, where an intellect is at work, ours should be active, and we should know the roots of the words. She does not harp on a point ; she pays her readers the compliment of assuming that they have intelligence. But she does not offer them puzzles. The writing is limpid in its depths.

By what strict discipline her task of preparation was done may be gathered in part from her essay on ' Composure ' and on ' Rejection.' They are lessons in the composition of sound and vibrant English, a sensitive English retaining dignity. Simple Saxon is too much a brawler ; and emotion, imagination, the eye on things, will be shrouded by obtrusive Latin. The voice we know is not the familiar voice when we hear it through a horn. But seasonable notes of the horn will help to elevation and the more embracing discourse. Latin offers that advantage if the words are discreetly chosen. The greater suppleness in a tongue of long usage by many races must, as Littré argues, make it an instrument of expression for the larger meanings and the delicate—the voluble semitones that the Teutonic cannot rival. Mrs. Meynell's plea is not for a return of the learnedness of the old coining Divines, *bien entendu* ; she pleads for

the eighteenth century's happy refuge in the language of greater tranquillity, 'Johnson's tranquillity,' as an ethical need of our day. 'We want to quell the exaggerated decision of monosyllables. We want the poise and pause that imply vitality at times better than headstrong movement expresses it.' They are not the times when Othello has Iago by the throat. Passion knows no tongue but plain Saxon with us. Mrs. Meynell's allusion is to the times for transmitting ideas, or summarily narrating events; and in that respect Lowell was of a like opinion, at a period when the mania for mother Saxon was wrenching our parents in literary language asunder to the state of divorce. Yet we have so Saxonized 'ation' and 'ition' as to make those polysyllables derived from the French repugnant if they are not electively handled; and the 'tranquillity of Johnson,' in Rasselas, for example, conveys the scenes to our musing fancy as effectively as a sleeper's dreams are presented by the sonorous trumpet of his nose. We are not, however, counselled to return to the Johnsonian stalk, the marching of words like men-at-arms in plated steel, under which the Saxon was a trampled stubble. 'One of the most charming things that a writer of English can achieve is the repayment of the united teaching by linking their results so exquisitely in his own practice that the words of the two schools shall be made to meet each other with a surprise and delight that shall prove them at once gayer strangers and sweeter companions than the world knew they were.' By this linking of results our scholarly literature may get to a rhythm of life having the colour of life. How it is when 'pure Saxon' reigns is to be seen in Freeman's History, where the hopping native monosyllables and stumpy trochees are multiplied to knock the sense of a situation upon our understanding until vision and connection are

lost within us for lack of the one compendious Latin word.

A powerful personal sentiment was required to preserve the equilibrium in Johnson, with whom Latin was his lingual club. The balance of the tongues is the task for us, and it is hard to maintain even where there is no strong predilection for the one or the other. Mrs. Meynell herself may be lured in the cooler moment to a slight inclination. In the first sentence of ' Rushes and Reeds ' we have : ' Taller than the grass and lower than the trees, there is another growth that feels the implicit spring.' One seems to have the enfolded spring of the year on an encloistered grass-plot when it is capped by this Latinity. We are commonly sensible of the library's atmosphere only in the apposite condensing term for the subject treated. She is too sensitively responsive to the natural world, to the humanity about her and the cry of a present time, for the exercise of doctorial pedantry. Her stores of knowledge, stores of reflection, burden her reader as little as she is hampered by them. Her eloquence is shown by repression, with the effect. Occasionally, as in ' The Lesson of Landscape, Sun, Cloud, Winds of the World,'—notably the great south-west — her hand is loosened. Her disposition is to a firm grasp of the reins, and her characteristic is everywhere the undertone. We have had our eminent masters of style. We have had the stylist of the picked English, in which we saw the picking ; the stylist in elegant English, *se dandinant*—very pardonably—under the consciousness of acknowledged elegance. Mrs. Meynell has much of Pyrrha's charm, the style correcting wealth and attaining to simplicity by trained art, the method unobtruded. Her probed diction has the various music in the irregular footing of prose, and if the sentences remind us passingly of the Emersonian short-

ness, they are not abrupt, they are smoothly sequent. It may be seen that she would not push for rivalry; the attraction is in her reserve. She must be a diligent reader of the Saintly Lives. Her manner presents to me the image of one accustomed to walk in holy places and keep the eye of a fresh mind on our tangled world, happier in observing than in speaking; careful to speak but briefly to such ear-beaten people, and then only when reflections press, the spirit is fervent, or observation calls for an exposure of some hopeful or some doubtful tendencies.

Her use of the undertone in the painting of a portrait, the sketching of a scene, is an artistic revelation. The few affirmative strokes placed among the retiring features of the gentleman in a 'Remembrance' surpass vividness in the impression. They make a Rembrandt canvas. The scene 'At Monastery Gates,' soberly coloured as it is, remains with us; we are drawn by an allurement, that is not the writer's invitation, to share her feeling. She feels deeply, saying little. A funny incident occurring in the monastery is related with an unformed smile, and the laughters are in it. Like the hero of her portrait, she has 'compassion on the multitude.' The tenderness inspiring the thoughtfulness of the 'Domus Angusta' is not stressed for an effect of pathos, but the reader's mind and heart are touched, enlarged, one may say with truth.

'The narrow house is a small human nature compelled to a large human destiny, charged with a fate too great, a history too various, for its slight capacities.' . . . 'That narrow house — there is sometimes a message from its living windows. Its bewilderment, its reluctance, its defect, show by moments from eyes that are apt to express none but common things. There are allusions, involuntary appeals in those brief glances.

Far from me and from my friends be the misfortune of meeting such looks in reply to pain of our inflicting. To be clever and sensitive, and to hurt the foolish and the stolid—wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world ? Not I, by this heavenly light.'

The undertone rises there to a point of shrillness for once. Poor average humanity—the world of the inarticulate—has long wanted such an advocate. Could Portia plead better before the court ? It is in Portia's tone. A similar impressive reserve is noticeable whenever this writer touches on children. There is not the word of affectionateness ; her knowledge and her maternal love of them are shown in her ready entry into the childish state and transcript of its germinal ideas, the feelings of the young,—a common subject for the sentimentalising hand, from which nothing is gathered. Only deep love could furnish the intimate knowledge to expound them so. Perhaps the most poetic, most suggestive also, of the essays in these two books is the one on ' The Illusion of Historic Time,' treating of the child's views of historical events, illuminatingly and delightfully describing what the child has for his great possession in the early days, and what the man has lost, though not absolutely lost if he imagined when he was a child. ' Rome was founded when we began Roman history, and that is why it seems so long ago. Suppose the man of thirty-five heard, at that present age, for the first time of Romulus. Why, Romulus would be nowhere. But he built his wall when every one was seven years old. It is by good fortune that " ancient " history is taught in the only ancient days. . . . By learning something of antiquity in the first ten years, the child enlarges the sense of time for all mankind.' The essay is in its essence a concentrated treatise on the imagination of childhood

and the uses in nourishing it; a piece of work of more than the literary value for which it is remarkable. It is work that philosophers may read with enlivenment; instructed, perhaps.

Mrs. Meynell indicates here and there that the 'sense of humour' is the touch within us restraining from excess. Were such the case, our people would be convicted of deficiency where the common belief is in their having a fair endowment. They can laugh; they can also extravagate, can be ultra-solemn in bodies, in journals, past measure overblown, pan-anglicanly tedious, and they are peculiar for their dogged merriment in coursing the toy-shop hare of a rank absurdity or flattering national habit round and round the field years after its creaking mechanism should have told them it has an acuter sensibility of the excessive than they. No, the principle of restraint, the leaning to proportion, is an intellectual attribute, and humour is apart from the intellect as an influence; it is often foreign to the intellect, unsanctioned, a helot at holiday or native claiming license under the dominant lord. Restraint comes of an habitual government of our faculties by the Comic Spirit—the livelier element of common sense, which has mounted to the intellectual station perforce of being more imaginative than the ordinary assemblage in debate over needs and customs. It is Right Reason's right hand weapon. Mrs. Meynell's paper on 'Pathos' (sham pathos—the craze for detecting it in a broad grin) would alone be sufficient to show that she has the comic insight eminently among modern writers. She is armed for penetrative criticism, and armoured to blunt the point of attack. Were it creative with her, she would no doubt not be so securely clad. Comic creative energy somewhat shakes composure, and is tricksy, given to take different forms for covert

purposes. Nothing so much provokes ἀγανάκτησις in English critics. The writer guilty of this offence shall run the gauntlet of them all down the line at every new publication, up to the end. Can she be more tolerant — or less consistent? In the passive manifestation of it, seeing that she is critical chiefly to admire, and courteous when her delicate stroke is mortal, we have to seek her peers—that is, in England.

Although she condenses, by virtue of a contemplative habit, she is reluctantly a phrase-maker; as a rule, only when the pressure of her subject enforces it: *e.g.*, of a gifted man marked by literary abstinence: 'He had an exquisite style from which to refrain.' Or, contrasting Greek symmetry in art with Japanese distortion, under an illustration of the human form: 'Man is Greek without and Japanese within.' There are more. But evidently she does not string her jewels on the way by a recurrence to the note-book. A lapse upon later journalese, in a sentence negatively describing the east wind, after a splendid picture of the south-west, offers testimony. They come from the running pen. So little does this thoughtful writer incline to the packed phrase or the smart, that one speculates on her attitude fronting an aphorist. The imposing Professor of Wisdom would require a stout constitution to keep him from seceding into vapour beneath her quiet scrutiny.

Whether the habit of journalism is likely to injure a choice individual style, is the question better asked in suspense; it is not for asking until the signs render it nugatory. Mrs. Meynell's two paragraphs on 'The Honours of Mortality' imply that, if she has done her best in the work for the day, she is resigned to the common fate of workers for the day, like her prized exemplar, whose 'finest distinction it was to desire no differences, no remembrance, but loss among the

innumerable forgotten.' The loftier aristocratic spirit travels by this road to democracy, if proudly or humbly it matters little. Authors 'writing for posterity' are figures for the caricaturist. Apparently we owe *A Woman in Grey* to journalism, and the train of thought following her on her bicycle in Oxford Street seems worth handing down, however uncertain its descent. 'She had learnt to be content with her share—no more—in common security, and to be pleased with her part in common hope. . . . *To this courage* the woman in grey has attained with a spring,' etc. How closely the writer feels with her sisterhood and for the world of the time to come, is indicated in her thoughts upon the woman's gaining courage: '"Thou art my warrior," said Volumnia, "I holp to frame thee." Shall a man inherit his mother's trick of speaking, or her habit and attitude, and not suffer something, against his wish, from her bequest of weakness, and something, against his heart, from her bequest of folly? From the legacies of an unlessoned mind a woman's heirs-male are not cut off in the Common Law of the generations of mankind. Brutus knew that the valour of Portia was settled upon his sons.'

The writer who does honour to journalism assists at least in salutary work, for which the honours of a delicate stylist may well be surrendered. The writer casting an irradiation on cheap daily things does an act of beneficence, and can consent to pass away with them. I have not seen any roughening or flattening of diction, or taint of limpidity; one slip only, and that can be excused as easily as effaced. Rather is it shown that service in this great school has added to fluency, and quickened the observation of the most penetrative eyes we have among us. There is less in the second book of the poise of the sentence on some costly expressive, and we have always literary English to beguile

or command the reader. It will hardly be otherwise, where an exacting taste imposes the correspondent self-respect. The author of *The New Lucian* is a journalist, and of as masterly a dicacity as when he gave us those classic dialogues. Other names could be cited. The writing that is thinking may be in constant exercise to any degree without injury while the physique is cheerful; and the writing to suit the day, and thinking upon demand, make a rallying harness for the capacities of the voluntary and able in service. One sees it to be good apprenticeship. But journalism is necessarily impressionist. An impressionist theatrical critic, for example, should have the 'Point of Honour' implanted in him animatingly if he is to do his duty to himself and to the public; and if, as Mrs. Meynell says, 'the point of honour is the simple secret of the few,' his office may tempt to the doings that call on force of soul to undo them subsequently in a frank palinode. Few have that either; so we behold the effects of a critic's moods, for one consequence, in the public indifference to criticism. Of the few who can recant handsomely, Mr. Archer is one; M. Jules Lemaître, the most competent of critics, is also one, as was shown in his amends to the Shade of Théodore de Banville the other day. He was an impressionist critic dogmatizing when he went wrong. I could wish him to read Mrs. Meynell's article on the acting of Eleonora Duse. He might dissent; he would own that our English critic writes with knowledge of the art of acting, with sensitive perception. She examines, and gives her good reasons for pronouncing; she is not 'déterministe' or dogmatic, she is impressionist inasmuch as she is spiritually receptive. A reader of her criticism who had never seen Signora Duse on the stage, would conceive how the actress excels, though there is nothing pointed in the

mention of the points. Those who have seen the great Italian are awakened by it to a better understanding of the art she illustrates and the grounds of her excellence. Great acting, great criticism: and both by reason of that quiescent, passionless, but not frigid, spiritual receptivity in study, from which issues the consummate representation, the right word upon it likewise.

Through all Mrs. Meynell's writings there is an avoidance of superlatives. Rarely does she indulge in an interjection. One may gather that she would disrelish the title bestowed by enraptured reviewers on exceptionally brilliant gifts; and it is battered enough. The power she has, and the charm it is clothed in, shall, then, be classed as distinction—the quality Matthew Arnold anxiously scanned the flats of earth to discover. It will serve as well as the more splendidly flashing and commoner term to specify her claim upon public attention. She has this distinction: the seizure of her theme, a fine dialectic, a pliable step, the feminine of strong good sense—equal, only sweeter,—and reflectiveness, humaneness, fervency of spirit. I can fancy Matthew Arnold, lighting on such essays as 'The Point of Honour,' 'A Point in Biography,' 'Symmetry and Incident,' and others that I have named, saying, with refreshment, 'She can write!' It does not seem to me too bold to imagine Carlyle listening, without the weariful gesture, to his wife's reading of the same, hearing them to the end, and giving his comment: 'That woman thinks!' A woman who thinks and who can write, who does not disdain the school of journalism, and who brings novelty and poetic beauty, the devout but open mind, to her practice of it, bears promise that she will some day rank as one of the great Englishwomen of Letters, at present counting humbly by computation beside their glorious French sisters in the art.

SHORT ARTICLES

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A PAUSE IN THE STRIFE [1]

Our 'Eriniad,' or ballad epic of the enfranchisement of the sister island is closing its first fytte for the singer, and with such result as those Englishmen who have some knowledge of their fellows foresaw. There are sufficient reasons why the Tories should always be able to keep together, but let them have the credit of cohesiveness and subordination to control. Though working for their own ends, they won the esteem of their allies, which will count for them in the struggles to follow. Their leaders appear to have seen what has not been distinctly perceptible to the opposite party—that the break up of the Liberals means the defection of the old Whigs in permanence, heralding the establishment of a powerful force against Radicalism, with a capital cry to the country. They have tactical astuteness. If they seem rather too proud of their victory, it is merely because, as becomes them, they do not look ahead. To rejoice in the gaining of a day, without having clear views of the morrow, is puerile enough. Any Tory victory, it may be said, is little more than a pause in the strife, unless when the Radical game is played 'to dish the Whigs,' and the Tories are now fast bound down by their incorporation of the latter to abstain from the violent springs and right-about-facings of the Derby-Disraeli period. They are so heavily weighted by the new combination that

[1] *Pall Mall Gazette*, July 9, 1886.

their Jack-in-the-box, Lord Randolph, will have to stand like an ordinary sentinel on duty, and take the measurement of his natural size. They must, on the supposition of their entry into office, even to satisfy their own constituents, produce a scheme. Their majority in the House will command it.

To this extent, then, Mr. Gladstone has not been defeated. The question set on fire by him will never be extinguished until the combustible matter has gone to ashes. But personally he meets a sharp rebuff. The Tories may well raise hurrahs over that. Radicals have to admit it, and point to the grounds of it. Between a man's enemies and his friends there comes out a rough painting of his character, not without a resemblance to the final summary, albeit wanting in the justly delicate historical touch to particular features. On the one side he is abused as 'the one-man power'; lauded on the other for his marvellous intuition of the popular will. One can believe that he scarcely wishes to march dictatorially, and full surely his Egyptian policy was from step to step a misreading of the will of the English people. He went forth on this campaign with the finger of Egypt not ineffectively levelled against him a second time. Nevertheless he does read his English; he has, too, the fatal tendency to the bringing forth of Bills in the manner of Jove big with Minerva. He perceived the necessity, and the issue of the necessity; clearly defined what must come, and, with a higher motive than the vanity with which his enemies charge him, though not with such high counsel as Wisdom at his ear, fell to work on it alone, produced the whole Bill alone, and then handed it to his Cabinet to digest, too much in love with the thing he had laid and incubated to permit of any serious dismemberment of its frame. Hence the disruption. He worked for the future, produced a Bill for the future,

and is wrecked in the present. Probably he can work in no other way than from the impulse of his enthusiasm, solitarily. It is a way of making men overweeningly in love with their creations. The consequence is likely to be that Ireland will get her full measure of justice to appease her cravings earlier than she would have had as much from the United Liberal Cabinet, but at a cost both to her and to England. Meanwhile we are to have a House of Commons incapable of conducting public business ; the tradesmen to whom the *Times* addressed pathetic condolences on the loss of their season will lose more than one ; and we shall be made sensible that we have an enemy in our midst, until a people, slow to think, have taken counsel of their native generosity to put trust in the most generous race on earth.

CONCESSION TO THE CELT [1]

Things are quiet outside an ant-hill until the stick has been thrust into it. Mr. Gladstone's Bill for helping to the wiser government of Ireland has brought forth our busy citizens on the top-rubble in traversing counter-swarms, and whatever may be said against a Bill that deals roughly with many sensitive interests, one asks whether anything less violently impressive would have roused industrious England to take this question at last into the mind, as a matter for settlement. The Liberal leader has driven it home ; and wantonly, in the way of a pedestrian demagogue, some think ; certainly to the discomposure of the comfortable and the myopely busy, who prefer to live on with a disease in the frame rather than at all be stirred. They can, we see, pronounce a positive electoral negative ; yet even they, after the eighty and odd years of our domestic perplexity, in the presence of the eighty and odd members pledged for Home Rule, have been moved to excited inquiries regarding measures—short of the obnoxious Bill. How much we suffer from sniffing the vain incense of that word practical, is contempt of prevision ! Many of the measures now being proposed responsively to the fretful cry for them, as a better alternative to correction by force of arms, are sound and just. Ten years back, or at a more recent period before Mr. Parnell's triumph in the number of his followers, they would have formed a basis for the appeasement of the troubled land. The institu-

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, October 1886, New Series, vol. xl. p. 448.

tion of county boards, the abolition of the detested Castle, something like the establishment of a Royal residence in Dublin, would have begun the work well. Materially and sentimentally, they were the right steps to take. They are now proposed too late. They are regarded as petty concessions, insufficient and vexatious. The lower and the higher elements in the population are fused by the enthusiasm of men who find themselves marching in full body on a road, under a flag, at the heels of a trusted leader ; and they will no longer be fed with sops. Petty concessions are signs of weakness to the unsatisfied ; they prick an appetite, they do not close breaches. If our object is, as we hear it said, to appease the Irish, we shall have to give them the Parliament their leader demands. It might once have been much less ; it may be worried into a raving, perhaps a desperate wrestling, for still more. Nations pay Sibylline prices for want of forethought. Mr. Parnell's terms are embodied in Mr. Gladstone's Bill, to which he and his band have subscribed. The one point for him is the statutory Parliament, so that Ireland may civilly govern herself ; and standing before the world as representative of his country, he addresses an applausive audience when he cites the total failure of England to do that business of government, as at least a logical reason for the claim. England has confessedly failed ; the world says it, the country admits it. We have failed, and not because the so-called Saxon is incapable of understanding the Celt, but owing to our system, suitable enough to us, of rule by Party, which puts perpetually a shifting hand upon the reins, and invites the clamour it has to allay. The Irish—the English too in some degree—have been taught that roaring, in its various forms, is the trick to open the ears of Ministers. We have encouraged by irritating them to practise it, until it has become a habit, an hereditary

profession with them. Ministers in turn have defensively adopted the arts of beguilement, varied by an exercise of the police. We grew accustomed to periods of Irish fever. The exhaustion ensuing we named tranquillity, and hoped that it would bear fruit. But we did not plant. The Party in office directed its attention to what was uppermost and urgent—to that which kicked them. Although we were living, by common consent, with a disease in the frame, eruptive at intervals, a national disfigurement always a danger, the Ministerial idea of arresting it for the purpose of healing was confined, before the passing of Mr. Gladstone's well-meant Land Bill, to the occasional despatch of commissions ; and, in fine, we behold through History the Irish malady treated as a form of British constitutional gout. Parliament touched on the Irish only when the Irish were active as a virus. Our later alternations of cajolery and repression bear painful resemblance to the nervous fit of rickety riders compounding with their destinations that they may keep their seats. The cajolery was foolish, if an end was in view; the repression inefficient. To repress efficiently we have to stifle a conscience accusing us of old injustice, and forget that we are sworn to freedom. The cries that we have been hearing for Cromwell or for Bismarck prove the existence of an impatient faction in our midst fitter to wear the collars of those masters whom they invoke than to drop a vote into the ballot-box. As for the prominent politicians who have displaced their rivals partly on the strength of an implied approbation of those cries, we shall see how they illumine the councils of a governing people. They are wiser than the barking dogs. Cromwell and Bismarck are great names ; but the harrying of Ireland did not settle it, and to Germanize a Posen and call it peace will find echo only in the German tongue. Posen is the error of a master-mind too much

given to hammer at obstacles. He has, however, the hammer. Can it be imagined in English hands? The braver exemplar for grappling with monstrous political tasks is Cavour, and he would not have hinted at the iron method or the bayonet for a pacification. Cavour challenged debate; he had faith in the active intellect, and that is the thing to be prayed for by statesmen who would register permanent successes. The Irish, it is true, do not conduct an argument coolly. Mr. Parnell and his eighty-five have not met the Conservative leader and his following in the Commons with the gravity of platonic disputants. But they have a logical position, equivalent to the best of arguments. They are representatives, they would say, of a country admittedly ill-governed by us; and they have accepted the Bill of the defeated Minister as final. Its provisions are their terms of peace. They offer in return for that boon to take the burden we have groaned under off our hands. If we answer that we think them insincere, we accuse these thrice accredited representatives of the Irish people of being hypocrites and crafty conspirators; and numbers in England, affected by the weapons they have used to get to their present strength, do think it; forgetful that our obtuseness to their constant appeals forced them into the extremer shifts of agitation. Yet it will hardly be denied that these men love Ireland; and they have not shown themselves by their acts to be insane. To suppose them conspiring for separation indicates a suspicion that they have neither hearts nor heads. For Ireland, separation is immediate ruin. It would prove a very short sail for these conspirators before the ship went down. The vital necessity of the Union for both countries, obviously for the weaker of the two, is known to them; and unless we resume our exasperation of the wild fellow the Celt can be made by such a process, we

have not rational grounds for treating him, or treating with him, as a Bedlamite. He has besides his passions shrewd sense ; and his passions may be rightly directed by benevolent attraction. This is language derided by the victorious enemy ; it speaks nevertheless what the world, and even troubled America, thinks of the Irish Celt. More of it now on our side of the Channel would be serviceable. The notion that he hates the English comes of his fevered chafing against the harness of England, and when subject to his fevers, he is unrestrained in his cries and deeds. That pertains to the nature of him. Of course, if we have no belief in the virtues of friendliness and confidence—none in regard to the Irishman—we show him his footing, and we challenge the issue. For the sole alternative is distinct antagonism, a form of war. Mr. Gladstone's Bill has brought us to that definite line. Ireland having given her adhesion to it, swearing that she does so in good faith, and will not accept a smaller quantity, peace is only to be had by our placing trust in the Irish ; we trust them or we crush them. Intermediate ways are but the prosecution of our ugly flounderings in Bogland ; and dubious as we see the choice on either side, a decisive step to right or left will not show us to the world so bemired, to ourselves so miserably inefficient, as we appear in this session of a new Parliament. With his eighty-five, apart from external operations lawful or not, Mr. Parnell can act as a sort of *lumbricus* in the House. Let journalists watch and chronicle events : if Mr. Gladstone has humour, they will yet note a peculiar smile on his closed mouth from time to time when the alien body within the House, from which, for the sake of its dignity and ability to conduct its affairs, he would have relieved it till the day of a warmer intelligence between Irish and English, paralyzes our machinery

of business. An ably-handled coherent body in the midst of the liquid groups will make it felt that Ireland is a nation, naturally dependent though she must be. We have to do with forces in politics, and the great majority of the Irish Nationalists in Ireland has made them a force.

No doubt Mr. Matthew Arnold is correct in his apprehensions of the dangers we may fear from a Dublin House of Commons. The declarations and novel or ultra theories might almost be written down beforehand. I should, for my part, anticipate a greater danger in the familiar attitude of the English metropolitan Press and public toward an experiment they dislike and incline to dread :—the cynical comments, the quotations between inverted commas, the commiserating shrug, cold irony, raw banter, growl of menace, sharp snap, rounds of laughter. Frenchmen of the Young Republic, not presently appreciated as offensive, have had some of these careless trifles translated for them, and have been stung. We favoured Germany with them now and then, before Germany became the first power in Europe. Before America had displayed herself as greatest among the giants that do not go to pieces, she had, as Americans forgivingly remember, without mentioning, a series of flicks of the whip. It is well to learn manners without having them imposed on us. There are various ways for tripping the experiment. Nevertheless, when the experiment is tried, considering that our welfare is involved in its not failing, as we have failed, we should prepare to start it cordially, cordially assist it. Thoughtful political minds regard the measure as a backward step ; yet conceiving but a prospect that a measure accepted by Home Rulers will possibly enable the Irish and English to step together, it seems better worth the

venture than to pursue a course of prospectless discord. Whatever we do or abstain from doing has now its evident dangers, and this being imminent may appear the larger of them ; but if a weighing of the conditions dictates it, and conscience approves, the wiser proceeding is to make trial of the untried. Our outlook was preternaturally black, with enormous increase of dangers when the originator of our species venturesomely arose from the posture of the *quatre pattes*. We consider that we have not lost by his temerity. In states of dubitation under impelling elements, the instinct pointing to courageous action is, besides the manlier, conjecturably the right one.

LESLIE STEPHEN[1]

When that noble body of scholarly and cheerful pedestrians, the Sunday Tramps, were on the march, with Leslie Stephen to lead them, there was conversation which would have made the presence of a shorthand writer a benefaction to the country. A pause to it came at the examination of the leader's watch and Ordnance map under the western sun, and word was given for the strike across country to catch the tail of a train offering dinner in London, at the cost of a run through hedges, over ditches and fallows, past proclamation against trespassers, under suspicion of being taken for more serious depredators in flight. The chief of the Tramps had a wonderful calculating eye in the observation of distances and the nature of the land, as he proved by his discovery of untried passes in the higher Alps, and he had no mercy for pursy followers. I have often said of this life-long student and philosophical head that he had in him the making of a great military captain. He would not have been opposed to the profession of arms if he had been captured early for the service, notwithstanding his abomination of bloodshed. He had a high, calm courage, was unperturbed in a dubious position, and would confidently take the way out of it which he conceived to be the better. We have not to deplore that he was diverted from the ways of a soldier, though England, as the country has been learning of late, cannot boast of many in uniform who have capacity for leader-

[1] Reprinted by permission from *The Author*, April 1904.

ship. His work in literature will be reviewed by his lieutenant of Tramps, one of the ablest of writers.[1] The memory of it remains with us, as being the profoundest and the most sober criticism we have had in our time. The only sting in it was an inoffensive humorous irony that now and then stole out for a roll over, like a furry cub, or the occasional ripple on a lake in grey weather. We have nothing left that is like it.

One might easily fall into the pit of panegyric by an enumeration of his qualities, personal and literary. It would not be out of harmony with the temper and characteristics of a mind so equable. He, the equable, whether in condemnation or eulogy. Our loss of such a man is great, for work was in his brain, and the hand was active till close upon the time when his breathing ceased. The loss to his friends can be replaced only by an imagination that conjures him up beside them. That will be no task to those who have known him well enough to see his view of things as they are, and revive his expression of it. With them he will live despite the word farewell.

[1] The late Frederic W. Maitland.

CRITICISM

CRITICISM

FINE PASSAGES IN VERSE AND PROSE

Selected by Living Men of Letters [1]

Mr. George Meredith writes :—

'The 24th *Iliad* contains the highest reaches in poetry. So many will refer to it that I do not swell the list.

'In modern English verse I would cite for excellence Keats's "Ode to a Grecian Urn," and "Ode to Autumn"; Tennyson's "Œnone"; the "Kubla Khan" of Coleridge.'

Mr. Meredith gives the whole of the second scene in the fourth act of Shakespeare's Henry VIII., but picks out the following passages therein as the finest :—

'KATHARINE

After my death I wish no other herald,
No other speaker of my living actions,
To keep mine honour from corruption,
But such an honest chronicler as Griffith.
Whom I most hated living, thou hast made me,
With thy religious truth and modesty,
Now in his ashes honour : Peace be with him !—
Patience, be near me still ; and set me lower :
I have not long to trouble thee.—Good Griffith,
Cause the musicians play me that sad note
I named my knell, whilst I sit meditating
On that celestial harmony I go to.

Sad and Solemn Music

. . . . . .

[1] The *Fortnightly Review*, August 1887.

KATHARINE

Sir, I most humbly pray you to deliver
This to my lord the king.

CAPUCIUS

Most willing, madam.

KATHARINE

In which I have commended to his goodness
The model of our chaste loves, his young daughter :—
The dews of heaven fall thick in blessings on her !—
Beseeching him to give her virtuous breeding ;
(She is young, and of a noble modest nature ;
I hope she will deserve well ;) and a little
To love her for her mother's sake, that lov'd him,
Heaven knows how dearly. My next poor petition
Is that his noble grace would have some pity
Upon my wretched women, that so long
Have follow'd both my fortunes faithfully :
Of which there is not one, I dare avow,
(And now I should not lie), but will deserve,
For virtue, and true beauty of the soul,
For honesty, and decent carriage,
A right good husband, let him be a noble ;
And, sure, those men are happy that shall have them.
The last is, for my men ;—they are the poorest,
But poverty could never draw them from me ;—
That they may have their wages duly paid them,
And something over to remember me by ;
If heaven had pleas'd to have given me longer life,
And able means, we had not parted thus.
These are the whole contents :—And, good my lord,
By that you love the dearest in this world,
As you wish Christian peace to souls departed,
Stand these poor people's friend, and urge the king
To do me this last right.

CAPUCIUS

By heaven I will ;
Or let me lose the fashion of a man !

KATHARINE

I thank you, honest lord. Remember me
In all humility unto his highness :
Say, his long trouble now is passing
Out of this world : tell him, in death I bless'd him,
For so I will.—Mine eyes grow dim.—Farewell,
My lord.—Griffith farewell.—Nay, Patience,
You must not leave me yet. I must to bed ;
Call in more women.—When I am dead, good wench,
Let me be us'd with honour ; strew me over
With maiden flowers, that all the world may know
I was a chaste wife to my grave : embalm me,
Then lay me forth : although unqueened, yet like
A queen, and daughter to a king, inter me,
I can no more. [*Exeunt, leading* KATHARINE.'

Further, Mr. Meredith gives the passage from Virgil's *Æneid*, Book 4, known as Dido's Lament.

In prose Mr. Meredith gives Hamlet's speech to the players, which is too well known to need quotation, and also the following passage from *Villette*, cap. 23, in which Charlotte Brontë describes the great French actress, Rachel, under the title of ' Vashti ' :—

' CHARLOTTE BRONTË.—" VILLETTE "

' Suffering had struck that stage empress ; and she stood before her audience neither yielding to, nor enduring, nor, in finite measure, resenting it ; she stood locked in struggle, rigid in resistance. She stood, not dressed, but draped in pale antique folds, long and regular like sculpture. A background and entourage and flooring of deepest crimson threw her out, white like alabaster—like silver : rather, be it said, like Death.

' Where was the artist of the Cleopatra ? Let him come and sit down and study this different vision. Let

him seek here the mighty brawn, the muscle, the abounding blood, the full-fed flesh he worshipped: let all materialists draw nigh and look on.

'I have said that she does not *resent* her grief. No; the weakness of that word would make it a lie. To her, what hurts becomes immediately embodied: she looks on it as a thing that can be attacked, worried down, torn in shreds. Scarcely a substance herself, she grapples to conflict with abstractions. Before calamity she is a tigress; she rends her woes, shivers them in convulsed abhorrence. Pain, for her, has no result in good: tears water no harvest of wisdom: on sickness, on death itself, she looks with the eyes of a rebel. Wicked, perhaps she is, but also she is strong; and her strength has conquered Beauty, has overcome Grace, and bound both at her side, captives peerlessly fair, and docile as fair. Even in the uttermost frenzy of energy is each mænad movement royally, imperially, incedingly upborne. Her hair, flying loose in revel or war, is still an angel's hair, and glorious under a halo. Fallen, insurgent, banished, she remembers the heaven where she rebelled. Heaven's light, following her exile, pierces its confines, and discloses their forlorn remoteness.'

Further, Mr. George Meredith gives the passage in the *Mémoires* of Saint-Simon which describes the character of the Regent Orléans.

CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE SEAT OF WAR IN ITALY

CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE SEAT OF WAR IN ITALY

LETTERS WRITTEN TO THE *MORNING POST* FROM THE SEAT OF WAR IN ITALY

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

FERRARA, *June* 22, 1866.

BEFORE this letter reaches London the guns will have awakened both the echo of the old river Po and the classical Mincio. The whole of the troops, about 110,000 men, with which Cialdini intends to force the passage of the first-named river are already massed along the right bank of the Po, anxiously waiting that the last hour of to-morrow should strike, and that the order for action should be given. The telegraph will have already informed your readers that, according to the intimation sent by General Lamarmora on Tuesday evening to the Austrian headquarters, the three days fixed by the general's message before beginning hostilities will expire at twelve p.m. of the 23rd of June.

Cialdini's headquarters have been established in this city since Wednesday morning, and the famous general, in whom the fourth corps he commands, and the whole of the nation, has so much confidence, has concentrated the whole of his forces within a comparatively narrow compass, and is ready for action. I believe therefore that by to-morrow the right bank of the Po will be connected with the mainland of the Polesine by several pontoon bridges, which will enable

Cialdini's *corps d'armée* to cross the river, and, as everybody here hopes, to cross it in spite of any defence the Austrians may make.

On my way to this ancient city last evening I met General Cadogan and two superior Prussian officers, who by this time must have joined Victor Emmanuel's headquarters at Cremona ; if not, they have been by this time transferred elsewhere, more on the front, towards the line of the Mincio, on which, according to appearance, the first, second, and third Italian *corps d'armée* seem destined to operate. The English general and the two Prussian officers above mentioned are to follow the king's staff, the first as English commissioner, the superior in rank of the two others in the same capacity.

I have been told here that, before leaving Bologna, Cialdini held a general council of the commanders of the seven divisions of which his powerful *corps d'armée* is formed, and that he told them that, in spite of the forces the enemy has massed on the left bank of the Po, between the point which faces Stellata and Rovigo, the river must be crossed by his troops, whatever might be the sacrifice this important operation requires. Cialdini is a man who knows how to keep his word, and, for this reason, I have no doubt he will do what he has already made up his mind to accomplish. I am therefore confident that before two or three days have elapsed, these 110,000 Italian troops, or a great part of them, will have trod, for the Italians, the sacred land of Venetia.

Once the river Po crossed by Cialdini's *corps d'armée*, he will boldly enter the Polesine and make himself master of the road which leads by Rovigo towards Este and Padua. A glance at the map will show your readers how, at about twenty or thirty miles from the first-mentioned town, a chain of hills, called the Colli

Euganei, stretches itself from the last spur of the Julian Alps, in the vicinity of Vicenza, gently sloping down towards the sea. As this line affords good positions for contesting the advance of an army crossing the Po at Lago Scuro, or at any other point not far from it, it is to be supposed that the Austrians will make a stand there, and I should not be surprised at all that Cialdini's first battle, if accepted by the enemy, should take place within that comparatively narrow ground which is within Montagnana, Este, Terradura, Abano, and Padua. It is impossible to suppose that Cialdini's *corps d'armée*, being so large, is destined to cross the Po only at one point of the river below its course : it is extremely likely that part of it should cross it at some point above, between Revere and Stellata, where the river is in two or three instances only 450 metres wide. Were the Italian general to be successful—protected as he will be by the tremendous fire of the powerful artillery he disposes of—in these twofold operations, the Austrians defending the line of the Colli Euganei could be easily outflanked by the Italian troops, who would have crossed the river below Lago Scuro. Of course these are mere suppositions, for nobody, as you may imagine, except the king, Cialdini himself, Lamarmora, Pettiti, and Menabrea, is acquainted with the plan of the forthcoming campaign. There was a rumour at Cialdini's headquarters to-day that the Austrians had gathered in great numbers in the Polesine, and especially at Rovigo, a small town which they have strongly fortified of late, with an apparent design to oppose the crossing of the Po, were Cialdini to attempt it at or near Lago Scuro. There are about Rovigo large tracts of marshes and fields cut by ditches and brooks, which, though owing to the dryness of the season [they] cannot be, as it was generally believed two weeks ago, easily inundated, yet

might well aid the operations the Austrians may undertake in order to check the advance of the Italian fourth *corps d'armée*. The resistance to the undertaking of Cialdini may be, on the part of the Austrians, very stout, but I am almost certain that it will be overcome by the ardour of Italian troops, and by the skill of their illustrious leader.

As I told you above, the declaration of war was handed over to an Austrian major for transmission to Count Stancowick, the Austrian governor of Mantua, on the evening of the 19th, by Colonel Bariola, *sous-chef* of the general staff, who was accompanied by the Duke Luigi of Sant' Arpino, the husband of the amiable widow of Lord Burghersh. The duke is the eldest son of Prince San Teodoro, one of the wealthiest noblemen of Naples. In spite of his high position and of his family ties, the Duke of Sant' Arpino, who is well known in London fashionable society, entered as a volunteer in the Italian army, and was appointed orderly officer to General Lamarmora. The choice of such a gentleman for the mission I am speaking of was apparently made with intention, in order to show the Austrians that the Neapolitan nobility is as much interested in the national movement as the middle and lower classes of the Kingdom, once so fearfully misruled by the Bourbons. The Duke of Sant' Arpino is not the only Neapolitan nobleman who has enlisted in the Italian army since the war with Austria broke out. In order to show you the importance which must be given to this *pronunciamiento* of the Neapolitan noblemen, allow me to give you here a short list of the names of those of them who have enlisted as private soldiers in the cavalry regiments of the regular army: The Duke of Policastro; the Count of Savignano Guevara, the eldest son of the Duke of Bovino; the Duke d'Ozia

d'Angri, who had emigrated in 1860, and returned to Naples six months ago; Marquis Rivadebro Serra; Marquis Pisicelli, whose family had left Naples in 1860 out of devotion to Francis II.; two Carraciolos, of the historical family from which sprung the unfortunate Neapolitan admiral of this name, whose head Lord Nelson would have done better not to have sacrificed to the cruelty of Queen Caroline; Prince Carini, the representative of an illustrious family of Sicily, a nephew of the Marquis del Vasto; and Pescara, a descendant of that great general of Charles V., to whom the proud Francis I. of France was obliged to surrender and give up his sword at the battle of Pavia. Besides these Neapolitan noblemen who have enlisted of late as privates, the Italian army now encamped on the banks of the Po and of the Mincio may boast of two Colonnas, a prince of Somma, two Barons Renzi, an Acquaviva, of the Duke of Atri, two Capece, two Princes Buttera, etc. To return to the mission of Colonel Bariola and the Duke of Sant' Arpino, I will add some details which were told me this morning by a gentleman who left Cremona yesterday evening, and who had them from a reliable source. The messenger of General Lamarmora had been directed to proceed from Cremona to the small village of Le Grazie, which, on the line of the Mincio, marks the Austrian and Italian frontier.

On the right bank of the Lake of Mantua, in the year 1340, stood a small chapel containing a miraculous painting of the Madonna, called by the people of the locality 'Santa Maria delle Grazie.' The boatmen and fishermen of the Mincio, who had been, as they said, often saved from certain death by the Madonna—as famous in those days as the modern Lady of Rimini, celebrated for the startling feat of winking her eyes—determined to erect for her a more worthy abode.

Hence arose the Santuario delle Grazie. Here, as at Loretto and other holy localities of Italy, a fair is held, in which, amongst a great number of worldly things, rosaries, holy images, and other miraculous objects are sold, and astounding boons are said to be secured at the most trifling expense. The Santuario della Madonna delle Grazie enjoying a far-spread reputation, the dumb, deaf, blind, and halt—in short, people afflicted with all sorts of infirmities—flock thither during the fair, and are not wanting even on the other days of the year. The church of Le Grazie is one of the most curious of Italy. Not that there is anything remarkable in its architecture, for it is an Italian Gothic structure of the simplest style. But the ornamental part of the interior is most peculiar. The walls of the building are covered with a double row of wax statues, of life size, representing a host of warriors, cardinals, bishops, kings, and popes, who—as the story runs—pretended to have received some wonderful grace during their earthly existence. Amongst the grand array of illustrious personages, there are not a few humbler individuals whose history is faithfully told (if you choose to credit it) by the painted inscriptions below. There is even a convict, who, at the moment of being hanged, implored succour of the all-powerful Madonna, whereupon the beam of the gibbet instantly broke, and the worthy individual was restored to society—a very doubtful benefit after all. On Colonel Bariola and the Duke of Sant' Arpino arriving at this place, which is only five miles distant from Mantua, their carriage was naturally stopped by the *commissaire* of the Austrian police, whose duty was to watch the frontier. Having told him that they had a despatch to deliver either to the military governor of Mantua or to some officer sent by him to receive it, the *commissaire* at once despatched a

mounted *gendarme* to Mantua. Two hours had scarcely elapsed when a carriage drove into the village of Le Grazie, from which an Austrian major of infantry alighted and hastened to a wooden hut where the two Italian officers were waiting. Colonel Bariola, who was trained in the Austrian military school of Viller Nashstad, and regularly left the Austrian service in 1848, acquainted the newly-arrived major with his mission, which was that of delivering the sealed despatch to the general in command of Mantua and receiving for it a regular receipt. The despatch was addressed to the Archduke Albert, commander-in-chief of the Austrian army of the South, care of the governor of Mantua. After the major had delivered the receipt, the three messengers entered into a courteous conversation, during which Colonel Bariola seized an opportunity of presenting the duke, purposely laying stress on the fact of his belonging to one of the most illustrious families of Naples. It happened that the Austrian major had also been trained in the same school where Colonel Bariola was brought up—a circumstance of which he was reminded by the Austrian officer himself. Three hours had scarcely elapsed from the arrival of the two Italian messengers of war at Le Grazie, on the Austrian frontier, when they were already on their way back to the headquarters of Cremona, where during the night the rumour was current that a telegram had been received by Lamarmora from Verona, in which Archduke Albert accepted the challenge. Victor Emmanuel, whom I saw at Bologna yesterday, arrived at Cremona in the morning at two o'clock, but by this time his Majesty's headquarters must have removed more towards the front, in the direction of the Oglio. I should not be at all surprised were the Italian headquarters to be established by to-morrow either at Piubega or Gazzoldo, if not actually at Goito, a village,

as you know, which marks the Italian-Austrian frontier on the Mincio. The whole of the first, second, and third Italian *corps d'armée* are by this time concentrated within that comparatively narrow space which lies between the position of Castiglione, Delle Stiviere, Lorrato, and Desenzano, on the Lake of Garda, and Solferino on one side; Piubega, Gazzoldo, Sacca, Goito, and Castellucchio on the other. Are these three *corps d'armée* to attack when they hear the roar of Cialdini's artillery on the right bank of the Po? Are they destined to force the passage of the Mincio either at Goito or at Borghetto? or are they destined to invest Verona, storm Peschiera, and lay siege to Mantua? This is more than I can tell you, for, I repeat it, the intentions of the Italian leaders are enveloped in a veil which nobody—the Austrians included—has as yet been able to penetrate. One thing, however, is certain, and it is this, that as the clock of Victor Emmanuel marks the last minute of the seventy-second hour fixed by the declaration delivered at Le Grazie on Wednesday by Colonel Bariola to the Austrian major, the fair land where Virgil was born and Tasso was imprisoned will be enveloped by a thick cloud of the smoke of hundreds and hundreds of cannon. Let us hope that God will be in favour of right and justice, which, in this imminent and fierce struggle, is undoubtedly on the Italian side.

CREMONA, *June* 30, 1866.

The telegraph will have already informed you of the concentration of the Italian army, whose headquarters have since Tuesday been removed from Redondesco to Piadena, the king having chosen the adjacent villa of Cigognolo for his residence. The concentrating movements of the royal army began on the morning

of the 27th, *i.e.*, three days after the bloody *fait d'armes* of the 24th, which, narrated and commented on in different manners according to the interests and passions of the narrators, still remains for many people a mystery. At the end of this letter you will see that I quote a short phrase with which an Austrian major, now prisoner of war, portrayed the results of the fierce struggle fought beyond the Mincio. This officer is one of the few survivors of a regiment of Austrian volunteers, uhlans, two squadrons of which he himself commanded. The declaration made by this officer was thoroughly explicit, and conveys the exact idea of the valour displayed by the Italians in that terrible fight. Those who incline to overrate the advantages obtained by the Austrians on Sunday last must not forget that if Lamarmora had thought proper to persist in holding the positions of Valeggio, Volta, and Goito, the Austrians could not have prevented him. It seems the Austrian general-in-chief shared this opinion, for, after his army had carried with terrible sacrifices the positions of Monte Vento and Custozza, it did not appear, nor indeed did the Austrians then give any signs, that they intended to adopt a more active system of warfare. It is the business of a commander to see that after a victory the fruit of it should not be lost, and for this reason the enemy is pursued and molested, and time is not left him for reorganisation. Nothing of this happened after the 24th—nothing has been done by the Austrians to secure such results. The frontier which separates the two dominions is now the same as it was on the eve of the declaration of war. At Goito, at Monzambano, and in the other villages of the extreme frontier, the Italian authorities are still discharging their duties. Nothing is changed in those places, were we to except that now and then an Austrian cavalry party suddenly

makes its appearance, with the only object of watching the movements of the Italian army. One of these parties, formed by four squadrons of the Würtemberg hussar regiment, having advanced at six o'clock this morning on the right bank of the Mincio, met the fourth squadron of the Italian lancers of Foggia and were beaten back, and compelled to retire in disorder towards Goito and Rivolta. In this unequal encounter the Italian lancers distinguished themselves very much, made some Austrian hussars prisoners, and killed a few more, amongst whom was an officer. The same state of thing prevails at Rivottella, a small village on the shores of the Lake of Garda, about four miles distant from the most advanced fortifications of Peschiera. There, as elsewhere, some Austrian parties advanced with the object of watching the movements of the Garibaldians, who occupy the hilly ground, which from Castiglione, Eseuta, and Castel Venzago stretches to Lonato, Salo, and Desenzano, and to the mountain passes of Caffaro. In the last-named place the Garibaldians came to blows with the Austrians on the morning of the 28th, and the former got the best of the fray. Had the *fait d'armes* of the 24th, or the battle of Custozza, as Archduke Albrecht calls it, been a great victory for the Austrians, why should the imperial army remain in such inaction? The only conclusion we must come to is simply this, that the Austrian losses have been such as to induce the commander-in-chief of the army to act prudently on the defensive. We are now informed that the charges of cavalry which the Austrian lancers and the Hungarian hussars had to sustain near Villafranca on the 24th with the Italian horsemen of the Aosta and Alessandria regiments have been so fatal to the former that a whole division of the Kaiser cavalry must be reorganised before it can be brought into the field again.

The regiment of Haller hussars and two of volunteer uhlans were almost destroyed in that terrible charge. To give you an idea of this cavalry encounter, it is sufficient to say that Colonel Vandoni, at the head of the Aosta regiment he commands, charged fourteen times during the short period of four hours. The volunteer uhlans of the Kaiser regiment had already given up the idea of breaking through the square formed by the battalion, in the centre of which stood Prince Humbert of Savoy, when they were suddenly charged and literally cut to pieces by the Alessandria light cavalry, in spite of the long lances they carried. This weapon and the loose uniform they wear makes them resemble the Cossacks of the Don. There is one circumstance, which, if I am not mistaken, has not as yet been published by the newspapers, and it is this. There was a fight on the 25th on a place at the north of Roverbella, between the Italian regiment of Novara cavalry and a regiment of Hungarian hussars, whose name is not known. This regiment was so thoroughly routed by the Italians that it was pursued as far as Villafranca, and had two squadrons put *hors de combat*, whilst the Novara regiment only lost twenty-four mounted men. I think it right to mention this, for it proves that, the day after the bloody affair of the 24th, the Italian army had still a regiment of cavalry operating at Villafranca, a village which lay at a distance of fifteen kilometres from the Italian frontier.

A report, which is much accredited here, explains how the Italian army did not derive the advantages it might have derived from the action of the 24th. It appears that the orders issued from the Italian headquarters during the previous night, and especially the verbal instructions given by Lamarmora and Pettiti to the staff officers of the different army corps, were either

forgotten or misunderstood by those officers. Those sent to Durando, the commander of the first corps, seem to have been as follows: That he should have marched in the direction of Castelnuovo, without, however, taking part in the action. Durando, it is generally stated, had strictly adhered to the orders sent from the headquarters, but it seems that General Cerale understood them too literally. Having been ordered to march on Castelnuovo, and finding the village strongly held by the Austrians, who received his division with a tremendous fire, he at once engaged in the action instead of falling back on the reserve of the first corps and waiting new instructions. If such was really the case, it is evident that Cerale thought that the order to march which he had received implied that he was to attack and get possession of Castelnuovo, had this village, as it really was, already been occupied by the enemy. In mentioning this fact I feel bound to observe that I write it under the most complete reserve, for I should be sorry indeed to charge General Cerale with having misunderstood such an important order.

I see that one of your leading contemporaries believes that it would be impossible for the king or Lamarmora to say what result they expected from their ill-conceived and worse-executed attempt. The result they expected is, I think, clear enough; they wanted to break through the quadrilateral and make their junction with Cialdini, who was ready to cross the Po during the night of the 24th. That the attempt was ill-conceived and worse-executed, neither your contemporary nor the public at large has, for the present, the right to conclude, for no one knows as yet but imperfectly the details of the terrible fight. What is certain, however, is that General Durando, perceiving that the Cerale division was lost, did all that he could to help it. Failing in this he turned

to his two aides-de-camp and coolly said to them: 'Now, gentlemen, it is time for you to retire, for I have a duty to perform which is a strictly personal one—the duty of dying.' On saying these words he galloped to the front and placed himself at about twenty paces from a battalion of Austrian sharp-shooters which were ascending the hill. In less than five minutes his horse was killed under him, and he was wounded in the right hand. I scarcely need add that his aides-de-camp did not flinch from sharing Durando's fate. They bravely followed their general, and one, the Marquis Corbetta, was wounded in the leg; the other, Count Esengrini, had his horse shot under him. I called on Durando, who is now at Milan, the day before yesterday. Though a stranger to him, he received me at once, and, speaking of the action of the 24th, he only said: 'I have the satisfaction of having done my duty. I wait tranquilly the judgement of history.'

Assuming, for argument's sake, that General Cerale misunderstood the orders he had received, and that, by precipitating his movement, he dragged into the same mistake the whole of Durando's corps—assuming, I say, this to be the right version, you can easily explain the fact that neither of the two contending parties are as yet in a position clearly to describe the action of the 24th. Why did neither the one nor the other display and bring into action the whole forces they could have had at their disposal? Why so many partial engagements at a great distance one from the other? In a word, why that want of unity, which, in my opinion, constituted the paramount characteristic of that bloody struggle? I may be greatly mistaken, but I am of opinion that neither the Italian general-in-chief nor the Austrian Archduke entertained on the night of the 23rd the idea of delivering a battle on the

24th. There, and only there, lies the whole mystery of the affair. The total want of unity of action on the part of the Italians assured to the Austrians, not the victory, but the chance of rendering impossible Lamarmora's attempt to break through the quadrilateral. This no one can deny; but, on the other hand, if the Italian army failed in attaining its object, the failure—owing to the bravery displayed both by the soldiers and by the generals—was far from being a disastrous or irreparable one. The Italians fought from three o'clock in the morning until nine in the evening like lions, showing to their enemies and to Europe that they know how to defend their country, and that they are worthy of the noble enterprise they have undertaken.

But let me now register one of the striking episodes of that memorable day. It was five o'clock p.m. when General Bixio, whose division held an elevated position not far from Villafranca, was attacked by three strong Austrian brigades, which had debouched at the same time from three different roads, supported with numerous artillery. An officer of the Austrian staff, waving a white handkerchief, was seen galloping towards the front of Bixio's position, and, once in the presence of this general, bade him surrender. Those who are not personally acquainted with Bixio cannot form an idea of the impression this bold demand must have made on him. I have been told that, on hearing the word 'surrender,' his face turned suddenly pale, then flushed like purple, and darting at the Austrian messenger, said, 'Major, if you dare to pronounce once more the word surrender in my presence, I tell you—and Bixio always keeps his word—that I will have you shot at once.' The Austrian officer had scarcely reached the general who had sent him, than Bixio, rapidly moving his division, fell with such impetuosity on the Austrian column, which

were ascending the hill, that they were thrown pell-mell in the valley, causing the greatest confusion amongst their reserve. Bixio himself led his men, and with his aides-de-camp, Cavaliere Filippo Fermi, Count Martini, and Colonel Malenchini, all Tuscans, actually charged the enemy. I have been told that, on hearing this episode, Garibaldi said, 'I am not at all surprised, for Bixio is the best general I have made.' Once the enemy was repulsed, Bixio was ordered to manœuvre so as to cover the backward movement of the army, which was orderly and slowly retiring on the Mincio. Assisted by the co-operation of the heavy cavalry, commanded by General Count de Sonnaz, Bixio covered the retreat, and during the night occupied Goito, a position which he held till the evening of the 27th.

In consequence of the concentrating movement of the Italian army which I have mentioned at the beginning of this letter, the fourth army corps (Cialdini's) still holds the line of the Po. If I am rightly informed, the decree for the formation of the fourth army corps was signed by the king yesterday. This corps is that of Garibaldi, and is about 40,000 strong. An officer who has just returned from Milan told me this morning that he had had an opportunity of speaking with the Austrian prisoners sent from Milan to the fortress of Finestrelle in Piedmont. Amongst them was an officer of a uhlan regiment, who had all the appearance of belonging to some aristocratic family of Austrian Poland. Having been asked if he thought Austria had really gained the battle on the 24th, he answered: 'I do not know if the illusions of the Austrian army go so far as to induce it to believe it has obtained a victory —I do not believe it. He who loves Austria cannot, however, wish she should obtain such victories, for they are the victories of Pyrrhus.'

HEADQUARTERS, ELEVENTH DIVISION,
BOZZOLO, *July* 3, 1866.

There is at Verona some element in the Austrian councils of war which we don't understand, but which gives to their operations in this present phase of the campaign just as uncertain and as vacillating a character as it possessed during the campaign of 1859. On Friday they are still beyond the Mincio, and on Saturday their small fleet on the Lake of Garda steams up to Desenzano, and opens fire against this defenceless city and her railway station, whilst two battalions of Tyrolese sharp-shooters occupy the building. On Sunday they retire, but early yesterday they cross the Mincio, at Goito and Monzambano, and begin to throw two bridges over the same river, between the last-named place and the mills of Volta. At the same time they erect batteries at Goito, Torrione, and Valeggio, pushing their reconnoitring parties of hussars as far as Medole, Castiglione delle Stiviere, and Montechiara, this last-named place being only at a distance of twenty miles from Brescia. Before this news reached me here this morning I was rather inclined to believe that they were playing at hide-and-seek, in the hope that the leaders of the Italian army should be tempted by the game and repeat, for the second time, the too hasty attack on the quadrilateral. This news, which I have from a reliable source, has, however, changed my former opinion, and I begin to believe that the Austrian Archduke has really made up his mind to come out from the strongholds of the quadrilateral, and intends actually to begin war on the very battlefields where his imperial cousin was beaten on the 24th June 1859. It may be that the partial disasters sustained by Benedek in Germany have determined the Austrian Government to order a more active system of war against Italy, or, as is generally

believed here, that the organisation of the commissariat was not perfect enough with the army Archduke Albert commands to afford a more active and offensive action. Be that as it may, the fact is that the news received here from several parts of Upper Lombardy seems to indicate, on the part of the Austrians, the intention of attacking their adversaries.

Yesterday whilst the peaceable village of Gazzoldo —five Italian miles from Goito—was still buried in the silence of night it was occupied by 400 hussars, to the great consternation of the people who were roused from their sleep by the galloping of their unexpected visitors. The sindaco, or mayor of the village, who is the chemist of the place, was, I hear, forcibly taken from his house and compelled to escort the Austrians on the road leading to Piubega and Redondesco. This worthy magistrate, who was not apparently endowed with sufficient courage to make at least half a hero, was so much frightened that he was taken ill, and still is in a very precarious condition. These inroads are not always accomplished with impunity, for last night, not far from Guidizzuolo, two squadrons of Italian light cavalry—Cavalleggieri di Lucca, if I am rightly informed—at a sudden turn of the road leading from the last-named village to Cerlongo, found themselves almost face to face with four squadrons of uhlans. The Italians, without numbering their foes, set spurs to their horses and fell like thunder on the Austrians, who, after a fight which lasted more than half an hour, were put to flight, leaving on the ground fifteen men *hors de combat*, besides twelve prisoners.

Whilst skirmishing of this kind is going on in the flat ground of Lombardy which lies between the Mincio and the Chiese, a more decisive action has been adopted by the Austrian corps which is quartered in the Italian Tyrol and Valtellina. A few days ago it was generally

believed that the mission of this corps was only to oppose Garibaldi should he try to force those Alpine passes. But now we suddenly hear that the Austrians are already masters of Caffaro, Bagolino, Riccomassino, and Turano, which points they are fortifying. This fact explains the last movements made by Garibaldi towards that direction. But whilst the Austrians are massing their troops on the Tyrolese Alps the revolution is spreading fast in the more southern mountains of the Friuli and Cadorre, thus threatening the flank and rear of their army in Venetia. This revolutionary movement may not have as yet assumed great proportions, but as it is the effect of a plan proposed beforehand it might become really imposing, more so as the ranks of those Italian patriots are daily swollen by numerous deserters and refractory men of the Venetian regiments of the Austrian army.

Although the main body of the Austrians seems to be still concentrated between Peschiera and Verona, I should not wonder if they crossed the Mincio either to-day or to-morrow, with the object of occupying the heights of Volta, Cavriana, and Solferino, which, both by their position and by the nature of the ground, are in themselves so many fortresses. Supposing that the Italian army should decide for action—and there is every reason to believe that such will be the case—it is not unlikely that, as we had already a second battle at Custozza, we may have a second one at Solferino.

That at the Italian headquarters something has been decided upon which may hasten the forward movement of the army, I infer from the fact that the foreign military commissioners at the Italian headquarters, who, after the 24th June had gone to pass the leisure of their camp life at Cremona, have suddenly made their appearance at Torre Malamberti, a villa belonging to the

Marquis Araldi, where Lamarmora's staff is quartered. A still more important event is the presence of Baron Ricasoli, whom I met yesterday evening on coming here. The President of the Council was coming from Florence, and, after stopping a few hours at the villa of Cicognolo, where Victor Emmanuel and the royal household are staying, he drove to Torre Malamberti to confer with General Lamarmora and Count Pettiti. The presence of the baron at headquarters is too important an incident to be overlooked by people whose business is that of watching the course of events in this country. And it should be borne in mind that on his way to headquarters Baron Ricasoli stopped a few hours at Bologna, where he had a long interview with Cialdini. Nor is this all; for the most important fact I have to report to-day is, that whilst I am writing (five o'clock a.m.) three corps of the Italian army are crossing the Oglio at different points—all three acting together and ready for any occurrence. This *reconnaissance en force* may, as you see, be turned into a regular battle should the Austrians have crossed the Mincio with the main body of their army during the course of last night. You see that the air around me smells enough of powder to justify the expectation of events which are likely to exercise a great influence over the cause of right and justice—the cause of Italy.

MARCARIA, *July* 3, Evening.

Murray's guide will save me the trouble of telling you what this little and dirty hole of Marcaria is like. The river Oglio runs due south, not far from the village, and cuts the road which from Bozzolo leads to Mantua. It is about seven miles from Castellucchio, a town which, since the peace of Villafranca, marked the Italian frontier

in Lower Lombardy. Towards this last-named place marched this morning the eleventh division of the Italians under the command of General Angioletti, only a month ago Minister of the Marine in Lamarmora's Cabinet. Angioletti's division of the second corps was, in the case of an attack, to be supported by the fourth and eighth, which had crossed the Oglio at Gazzuolo four hours before the eleventh had started from the place from which I am now writing. Two other divisions also moved in an oblique line from the upper course of the above-mentioned river, crossed it on a pontoon bridge, and were directed to maintain their communications with Angioletti's on the left, whilst the eighth and fourth would have formed its right. These five divisions were the *avant garde* of the main body of the Italian army. I am not in a position to tell you the exact line the army thus advancing from the Oglio has followed, but I have been told that, in order to avoid the possibility of repeating the errors which occurred in the action of the 24th, the three *corps d'armée* have been directed to march in such a manner as to enable them to present a compact mass should they meet the enemy. Contrary to all expectations, Angioletti's division was allowed to enter and occupy Castellucchio without firing a shot. As its vanguard reached the hamlet of Ospedaletto it was informed that the Austrians had left Castellucchio during the night, leaving a few hussars, who, in their turn, retired on Mantua as soon as they saw the cavalry Angioletti had sent to reconnoitre both the country and the borough of Castellucchio.

News has just arrived here that General Angioletti has been able to push his outposts as far as Rivolta on his left, and still farther forward on his front towards Curtalone. Although the distance from Rivolta to Goito is only five miles, Angioletti, I have been told,

could not ascertain whether the Austrians had crossed the Mincio in force.

What part both Cialdini and Garibaldi will play in the great struggle nobody can tell. It is certain, however, that these two popular leaders will not be idle, and that a battle, if fought, will assume the proportions of an almost unheard of slaughter.

General Headquarters of the Italian Army,
Torre Malimberti, *July* 7, 1866.

Whilst the Austrian emperor throws himself at the feet of the ruler of France—I was almost going to write the arbiter of Europe—Italy and its brave army seem to reject disdainfully the idea of getting Venetia as a gift of a neutral power. There cannot be any doubt as to the feeling in existence since the announcement of the Austrian proposal by the *Moniteur* being one of astonishment, and even indignation so far as Italy herself is concerned. One hears nothing but expressions of this kind in whatever Italian town he may be, and the Italian army is naturally anxious that she should not be said to relinquish her task when Austrians speak of having beaten her, without proving that she can beat them too. There are high considerations of honour which no soldier or general would ever think of putting aside for humanitarian or political reasons, and with these considerations the Italian army is fully in accord since the 24th June. The way, too, in which the Kaiser chose to give up the long-contested point, by ignoring Italy and recognising France as a party to the Venetian question, created great indignation amongst the Italians, whose papers declare, one and all, that a fresh insult has been offered to the country. This is the state of public opinion here, and unless the greatest advantages are obtained by a premature armistice and a hurried treaty of peace, it

is likely to continue the same, not to the entire security of public order in Italy. As a matter of course, all eyes are turned towards Villa Pallavicini, two miles from here, where the king is to decide upon either accepting or rejecting the French emperor's advice, both of which decisions are fraught with considerable difficulties and no little danger. The king will have sought the advice of his ministers, besides which that of Prussia will have been asked and probably given. The matter may be decided one way or the other in a very short time, or may linger on for days to give time for public anxiety and fears to be allayed and to calm down. In the meantime, it looks as if the king and his generals had made up their mind not to accept the gift. An attack on the Borgoforte *tête-de-pont* on the right side of the Po, began on 5th at half-past three in the morning, under the immediate direction of General Cialdini. The attacking corps was the Duke of Mignano's. All the day yesterday the gun was heard at Torre Malamberti, as it was also this morning between ten and eleven o'clock. Borgoforte is a fortress on the left side of the Po, throwing a bridge across this river, the right end of which is headed by a strong *tête-de-pont*, the object of the present attack. This work may be said to belong to the quadrilateral, as it is only an advanced part of the fortress of Mantua, which, resting upon its rear, is connected to Borgoforte by a military road supported on the Mantua side by the Pietolo fortress. The distance between Mantua and Borgoforte is only eleven kilometres. The *tête-de-pont* is thrown upon the Po ; its structure is of recent date, and it consists of a central part and of two wings, called Rocchetta and Bocca di Ganda respectively. The lock here existing is enclosed in the Rocchetta work.

Since I wrote you my last letter Garibaldi has been

obliged to desist from the idea of getting possession of Bagolino, Sant' Antonio, and Monte Suello, after a fight which lasted four hours, seeing that he had to deal with an entire Austrian brigade, supported by uhlans, sharp-shooters (almost a battalion) and twelve pieces of artillery. These positions were subsequently abandoned by the enemy, and occupied by Garibaldi's volunteers. In this affair the general received a slight wound in his left leg, the nature of which, however, is so very trifling, that a few days will be enough to enable him to resume active duties. It seems that the arms of the Austrians proved to be much superior to those of the Garibaldians, whose guns did very bad service. The loss of the latter amounted to about 100 killed and 200 wounded, figures in which the officers appear in great proportion, owing to their having been always at the head of their men, fighting, charging, and encouraging their comrades throughout. Captain Adjutant-Major Battino, formerly of the regular army, died, struck by three bullets, while rushing on the Austrians with the first regiment. On abandoning the Caffaro line, which they had reoccupied after the Lodrone encounter—in consequence of which the Garibaldians had to fall back because of the concentration following the battle of Custozza—the Austrians have retired to the Lardara fortress, between the Stabolfes and Tenara mountains, covering the route to Tione and Trento, in the Italian Tyrol. The third regiment of volunteers suffered most, as two of their companies had to bear the brunt of the terrible Austrian fire kept up from formidable positions. Another fight was taking place almost at the same time in the Val Camonico, *i.e.*, north of the Caffaro, and of Rocca d'Anfo, Garibaldi's *point d'appui*. This encounter was sustained in the same proportions, the Italians losing one of their bravest and best officers in the person

of Major Castellini, a Milanese, commander of the second battalion of Lombardian *bersaglieri*. Although these and Major Caldesi's battalion had to fall back from Vezza, a strong position was taken near Edalo, while in the rear a regiment kept Breno safe.

Although still at headquarters only two days ago, Baron Ricasoli has been suddenly summoned by telegram from Florence, and, as I hear, has just arrived. This is undoubtedly brought about by the new complications, especially as, at a council of ministers presided over by the baron, a vote, the nature of which is as yet unknown, was taken on the present state of affairs. As you know very well in England, Italy has great confidence in Ricasoli, whose conduct, always far from obsequious to the French emperor, has pleased the nation. He is thought to be at this moment the right man in the right place, and with the great acquaintance he possesses of Italy and the Italians, and with the co-operation of such an honest man as General Lamarmora, Italy may be pronounced safe, both against friends and enemies.

From what I saw this morning, coming back from the front, I presume that something, and that something new perhaps, will be attempted to-morrow. So far, the proposed armistice has had no effect upon the dispositions at general headquarters, and did not stay the cannon's voice. In the middle of rumours, of hopes and fears, Italy's wish to push on with the war has as yet been adhered to by her trusted leaders.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE FIRST ARMY CORPS,
PIADENA, *July* 8, 1866.

As I begin writing you, no doubt can be entertained that some movement is not only in contemplation at headquarters, but is actually provided to take place

to-day, and that it will probably prove to be against the Austrian positions at Borgoforte, on the left bank of the Po. Up to this time the *tête-de-pont* on the right side of the river had only been attacked by General the Duke of Mignano's guns. It would now, on the contrary, be a matter of cutting the communications between Borgoforte and Mantua, by occupying the lower part of the country around the latter fortress, advancing upon the Valli Veronesi, and getting round the quadrilateral into Venetia. While, then, waiting for further news to tell us whether this plan has been carried into execution, and whether it will be pursued, mindless of the existence of Mantua and Borgoforte on its flanks, one great fact is already ascertained, that the armistice proposed by the Emperor Napoleon has not been accepted, and that the war is to be continued. The Austrians may shut themselves up in their strongholds, or may even be so obliging as to leave the king the uncontested possession of them by retreating in the same line as their opponents advance; the pursuit, if not the struggle, the war, if not the battle, will be carried on by the Italians. At Torre Malamberti, where the general headquarters are, no end of general officers were to be seen yesterday hurrying in all directions. I met the king, Generals Brignone, Gavone, Valfré, and Menabrea within a few minutes of one another, and Prince Amadeus, who has entirely recovered from his wound, had been telegraphed for, and will arrive in Cremona to-day. No precise information is to be obtained respecting the intentions of the Austrians, but it is to be hoped for the Italian army, and for the credit of its generals, that more will be known about them now than was known on the eve of the famous 24th of June, and on its very morning. The heroism of the Italians on that memorable day surpasses any possible idea that

can be formed, as it did also surpass all expectations of the country. Let me relate you a few out of many heroic facts which only come to light when an occasion is had of speaking with those who have been eye-witnesses of them, as they are no object of magnified regimental orders or, as yet, of well-deserved honours. Italian soldiers seem to think that the army only did its duty, and that, wherever Italians may fight, they will always show equal valour and firmness. Captain Biraghi, of Milan, belonging to the general staff, having in the midst of the battle received an order from General Lamarmora for General Durando, was proceeding with all possible speed towards the first army corps, which was slowly retreating before the superior forces of the enemy and before the greatly superior number of his guns, when, while under a perfect shower of grape and canister, he was all of a sudden confronted by an Austrian officer of cavalry who had been lying in wait for the Italian orderly. The Austrian fires his revolver at Biraghi, and wounds him in the arm. Nothing daunted, Biraghi assails him and makes him turn tail; then, following in pursuit, unsaddles him, but has his own horse shot down under him. Biraghi disentangles himself, kills his antagonist, and jumps upon the latter's horse. This, however, is thrown down also in a moment by a cannon-ball, so that the gallant captain has to go back on foot, bleeding, and almost unable to walk. Talking of heroism, of inimitable endurance, and strength of soul, what do you think of a man who has his arm entirely carried away by a grenade, and yet keeps on his horse, firm as a rock, and still directs his battery, until hemorrhage—and hemorrhage *alone*—strikes him down at last, *dead!* Such was the case with a Neapolitan—Major Abate, of the artillery—and his name is worth the glory of a whole army, of a whole

war ; and may only find a fit companion in that of an officer of the eighteenth battalion of *bersaglieri*, who, dashing at an Austrian flag-bearer, wrenches the standard out of his hands with his left one, has it clean cut away by an Austrian officer standing near, and immediately grapples it with his right, until his own soldiers carry him away with his trophy ! Does not this sound like Greek history repeated—does it not look as if the brave men of old had been born again, and the old facts renewed to tell of Italian heroism ? Another *bersagliere*—a Tuscan, by name Orlandi Matteo, belonging to that heroic fifth battalion which fought against entire brigades, regiments, and battalions, losing 11 out of its 16 officers, and about 300 out of its 600 men—Orlandi, was wounded already, when, perceiving an Austrian flag, he makes a great effort, dashes at the officer, kills him, takes the flag, and, almost dying, gives it over to his lieutenant. He is now in a ward of the San Domenico Hospital in Brescia, and all who have learnt of his bravery will earnestly hope that he may survive to be pointed out as one of the many who covered themselves with fame on that day. If it is sad to read of death encountered in the field by so many a patriotic and brave soldier, it is sadder still to learn that not a few of them were barbarously killed by the enemy, and killed, too, when they were harmless, for they lay wounded on the ground. The Sicilian colonel, Stalella, a son-in-law of Senator Castagnetto, and a courageous man amongst the most courageous of men, was struck in the leg by a bullet, and thrown down from his horse while exciting his men to repulse the Austrians, which in great masses were pressing on his thinned column. Although retreating, the regiment sent some of his men to take him away, but as soon as he had been put on a stretcher [he] had to be put down, as

ten or twelve uhlans were galloping down, obliging the men to hide themselves in a bush. When the uhlans got near the colonel, and when they had seen him lying down in agony, they all planted their lances in his body ! Is not this wanton cruelty—cruelty even unheard of—cruelty that no savage possesses ? Still these are facts, and no one will ever dare to deny them from Verona and Vienna, for they are known as much as it was known and seen that the uhlans and many of the Austrian soldiers were drunk when they began fighting, and that alighting from the trains they were provided with their rations and with rum, and that they fought without their haversacks. This is the truth, and nothing beyond it has to the honour of the Italians been asserted, whether to the disgrace or credit of their enemies ; so that while denying that they ill-treat Austrian prisoners, they are ready to state that theirs are well treated in Verona, without thinking of slandering and calumniating as the Vienna papers have done.

This morning Prince Amadeus arrived in Cremona, where a most spontaneous and hearty reception was given him by the population and the National Guard. He proceeded at once by the shortest way to the head-quarters, so that his wish to be again at the front when something should be done has been accomplished. This brave young man, and his worthy brother, Prince Humbert, have won the applause of all Italy, which is justly proud of counting her king and her princes amongst the foremost in the field.

I have just learned from a most reliable source that the Austrians have mined the bridge of Borghetto on the Mincio, so that, should it be blown up, the only two, those of Goito and Borghetto, would be destroyed, and the Italians obliged to make provisional ones instead. I also hear that the Venetian towns are without any

garrison, and that most probably all the forces are massed on two lines, one from Peschiera to Custozza and the other behind the Adige.

You will probably know by this time that the garrison of Vienna had on the 3rd been directed to Prague. The news we receive from Prussia is on the whole encouraging, inasmuch as the greatly feared armistice has been repulsed by King William. Some people here think that France will not be too hard upon Italy for keeping her word with her ally, and that the brunt of French anger or disapproval will have to be borne by Prussia. This is the least she can expect, as you know!

It is probable that by to-morrow I shall be able to write you more about the Italo-Austrian war of 1866.

GONZAGA, *July* 9, 1866.

I write you from a villa, only a mile distant from Gonzaga, belonging to the family of the Counts Arrivabene of Mantua. The owners have never re-entered it since 1848, and it is only the fortune of war which has brought them to see their beautiful seat of the Aldegatta, never, it is to be hoped for them, to be abandoned again. It is, as you see, 'Mutatum ab illo.' Onward have gone, then, the exiled patriots! onward will go the nation that owns them! The wish of every one who is compelled to remain behind is—that the army, that the volunteers, that the fleet, should all co-operate, and that they should, one and all, land on Venetian ground, to seek for a great battle, to give the army back the fame it deserves, and to the country the honour it possesses. The king is called upon to maintain the word nobly given to avenge Novara, and with it the new Austrian insulting proposal. All, it is said, is ready. The army has been said to be numerous;

if to be numerous and brave, means to deserve victory, let the Italian generals prove what Italian soldiers are worthy of. If they will fight, the country will support them with the boldest of resolutions—the country will accept a discussion whenever the Government, having dispersed all fears, will proclaim that the war is to be continued till victory is inscribed on Italy's shield.

As I am not far from Borgoforte, I am able to learn more than the mere cannon's voice can tell me, and so will give you some details of the action against the *tête-de-pont*, which began, as I told you in one of my former letters, on the 4th. In Borgoforte there were about 1500 Austrians, and, on the night from the 5th to the 6th, they kept up from their four fortified works a sufficiently well-sustained fire, the object of which was to prevent the enemy from posting his guns. This fire, however, did not cause any damage, and the Italians were able to plant their batteries. Early on the 6th, the firing began all along the line, the Italian 16-pounders having been the first to open fire. The Italian right was commanded by Colonel Mattei, the left by Colonel Bangoni, who did excellent work, while the other wing was not so successful. The heaviest guns had not yet arrived owing to one of those incidents always sure to happen when least expected, so that the 40-pounders could not be brought to bear against the forts until later in the day. The damage done to the works was not great for the moment, but still the advantage had been gained of feeling the strength of the enemy's positions and finding the right way to attack them. The artillerymen worked with great vigour, and were only obliged to desist by an unexpected order which arrived about two p.m. from General Cialdini. The attack was, however, resumed on the following day, and the condition of the Monteggiana

and Rochetta forts may be pronounced precarious. As a sign of the times, and more especially of the just impatience which prevails in Italy about the general direction of the army movements, it may not be without importance to notice that the Italian press has begun to cry out against the darkness in which everything is enveloped, while the time already passed since the 24th June tells plainly of inaction. It is remarked that the bitter gift made by Austria of the Venetian provinces, and the suspicious offer of mediation by France, ought to have found Italy in greatly different condition, both as regards her political and military position. Italy is, on the contrary, in exactly the same state as when the Archduke Albert telegraphed to Vienna that a great success had been obtained over the Italian army. These are facts, and, however strong and worthy of respect may be the reasons, there is no doubt that an extraordinary delay in the resumption of hostilities has occurred, and that at the present moment operations projected are perfectly mysterious. Something is let out from time to time which only serves to make the subsequent absence of news more and more puzzling. For the present the first official relation of the unhappy fight of the 24th June is published, and is accordingly anxiously scanned and closely studied. It is a matter of general remark that no great military knowledge is required to perceive that too great a reliance was placed upon supposed facts, and that the indulgence of speculations and ideas caused the waste of so much precious blood. The prudence characterising the subsequent moves of the Austrians may have been caused by the effects of their opponents' arrangements, but the Italian commanders ought to have avoided the responsibility of giving the enemy the option to move.

It is clear that to mend things the utterance of

generous and patriotic cries is not sufficient, and that it must be shown that the vigour of the body is not at all surpassed by the vigour of the mind. It is also clear that many lives might have been spared if there had been greater proofs of intelligence on the part of those who directed the movement.

The situation is still very serious. Such an armistice as General von Gablenz could humiliate himself enough to ask from the Prussians has been refused, but another which the Emperor of the French has advised them to accept might ultimately become a fact. For Italy, the purely Venetian question could then also be settled, while the Italian, the national question, the question of right and honour which the army prizes so much, would still remain to be solved.

GONZAGA, *July* 12, 1866.

Travelling is generally said to be troublesome, but travelling with and through brigades, divisions, and army corps, I can certify to be more so than is usually agreeable. It is not that Italian officers or Italian soldiers are in any way disposed to throw obstacles in your way; but they, unhappily for you, have with them the inevitable cars with the inevitable carmen, both of which are enough to make your blood freeze, though the barometer stands very high. What with their indolence, what with their number and the dust they made, I really thought they would drive me mad before I should reach Casalmaggiore on my way from Torre Malamberti. I started from the former place at three a.m., with beautiful weather, which, true to tradition, accompanied me all through my journey. Passing through San Giovanni in Croce, to which the headquarters of General Pianell had been transferred,

I turned to the right in the direction of the Po, and began to have an idea of the wearisome sort of journey which I would have to make up to Casalmaggiore. On both sides of the way some regiments belonging to the rear division were still camped, and as I passed it was most interesting to see how busy they were cooking their 'rancio,' polishing their arms, and making the best of their time. The officers stood leisurely about gazing and staring at me, supposing, as I thought, that I was travelling with some part in the destiny of their country. Here and there some soldiers who had just left the hospitals of Brescia and Milan made their way to their corps and shook hands with their comrades, from whom only illness or the fortune of war had made them part. They seemed glad to see their old tent, their old drum, their old colour-sergeant, and also the flag they had carried to the battle and had not at any price allowed to be taken. I may state here, *en passant*, that as many as six flags were taken from the enemy in the first part of the day of Custozza, and were subsequently abandoned in the retreat, while of the Italians only one was lost to a regiment for a few minutes, when it was quickly retaken. This fact ought to be sufficient by itself to establish the bravery with which the soldiers fought on the 24th, and the bravery with which they will fight if, as they ardently wish, a new occasion is given to them.

As long as I had only met troops, either marching or camping on the road, all went well, but I soon found myself mixed with an interminable line of cars and the like, forming the military and the civil train of the moving army. Then it was that it needed as much patience to keep from jumping out of one's carriage and from chastising the *carrettieri*, as they would persist in not making room for one, and being as dumb to one's

entreaties as a stone. When you had finished with one you had to deal with another, and you find them all as obstinate and as egotistical as they are from one end of the world to the other, whether it be on the Casalmaggiore road or in High Holborn. From time to time things seemed to proceed all right, and you thought yourself free from further trouble, but you soon found out your mistake, as an enormous ammunition car went smack into your path, as one wheel got entangled with another, and as imperturbable Signor Carrettiere evidently took delight at a fresh opportunity for stoppage, inaction, indolence, and sleep. I soon came to the conclusion that Italy would not be free when the Austrians had been driven away, for that another and a more formidable foe—an enemy to society and comfort, to men and horses, to mankind in general—would have still to be beaten, expelled, annihilated, in the shape of the *carrettiere*. If you employ him, he robs you fifty times over; if you want him to drive quickly, he is sure to keep the animal from going at all; if, worse than all, you never think of him, or have just been plundered by him, he will not move an inch to oblige you. Surely the cholera is not the only pestilence a country may be visited with; and, should Cialdini ever go to Vienna, he might revenge Novara and the Spielberg by taking with him the *carrettieri* of the whole army.

At last Casalmaggiore hove in sight, and, when good fortune and the carmen permitted, I reached it. It was time! No iron-plated Jacob could ever have resisted another two miles' journey in such company. At Casalmaggiore I branched off. There were, happily, two roads, and not the slightest reason or smallest argument were needed to make me choose *that* which my *cauchemar* had not chosen. They were passing the river at Casalmaggiore. I went, of course, for the

same purpose, somewhere else. Any place was good enough—so I thought, at least, then. New adventures, new miseries awaited me—some *carrettiere*, or other, guessing that I was no friend of his, nor of the whole set of them, had thrown the *jattatura* on me.

I alighted at the Colombina, after four hours' ride, to give the horses time to rest a little. The Albergo della Colombina was a great disappointment, for there was nothing there that could be eaten. I decided upon waiting most patiently, but most unlike a few cavalry officers, who, all covered with dust, and evidently as hungry and as thirsty as they could be, began to swear to their hearts' content. In an hour some eggs and some *salame*, a kind of sausage, were brought up, and quickly disposed of. A young lieutenant of the thirtieth infantry regiment of the Pisa brigade took his place opposite, and we were soon engaged in conversation. He had been in the midst and worst part of the battle of Custozza, and had escaped being taken prisoner by what seemed a miracle. He told me how, when his regiment advanced on the Monte Croce position, which he practically described to me as having the form of an English pudding, they were fired upon by batteries both on their flanks and front. The lieutenant added, however, rather contemptuously, that they did not even bow before them, as the custom appears to be—that is, to lie down, as the Austrians were firing very badly. The cross-fire got, however, so tremendous that an order had to be given to keep down by the road to avoid being annihilated. The assault was given, the whole range of positions was taken, and kept too for hours, until the infallible rule of three to one, backed by batteries, grape, and canister, compelled them to retreat, which they did slowly and in order. It was then that their brigade commander, Major-

General Rey de Villarey, who, though a native of Mentone, had preferred remaining with his king from going over to the French after the cession, turning to his son, who was also his aide-de-camp, said in his dialect, 'Now, my son, we must die both of us,' and with a touch of the spurs was soon in front of the line and on the hill, where three bullets struck him almost at once dead. The horse of his son falling while following, his life was spared. My lieutenant at this moment was so overcome with hunger and fatigue that he fell down, and was thought to be dead. He was not so, however, and had enough life to hear, after the fight was over, the Austrian Jägers pass by, and again retire to their original positions, where their infantry was lying down, not dreaming for one moment of pursuing the Italians. Four of his soldiers—all Neapolitans—he heard coming in search of him, while the bullets still hissed all round; and, as soon as he made a sign to them, they approached, and took him on their shoulders back to where was what remained of the regiment. It is highly creditable to Italian unity to hear an old Piedmontese officer praise the levies of the new provinces, and the lieutenant took delight in relating that another Neapolitan was in the fight standing by him, and firing as fast as he could, when a shell having burst near him, he disdainfully gave it a look, and did not even seek to save himself from the *jattatura*.

The gallant lieutenant had unfortunately to leave at last, and I was deprived of many an interesting tale and of a brave man's company. I started, therefore, for Viadana, where I purposed passing the Po, the left bank of which the road was now following parallel with the stream. At Viadana, however, I found no bridge, as the military had demolished what existed only the day before, and so had to look out for in-

formation. As I was going about under the porticoes which one meets in almost all the villages in this neighbourhood, I was struck by the sight of an ancient and beautiful piece of art—for so it was—a Venetian mirror of Murano. It hung on the wall inside the village draper's shop, and was readily shown me by the owner, who did not conceal the pride he had in possessing it. It was one of those mirrors one rarely meets with now, which were once so abundant in the old princes' castles and palaces. It looked so deep and true, and the gilt frame was so light, and of such a purity and elegance, that it needed all my resolution to keep from buying it, though a bargain would not have been effected very easily. The mirror, however, had to be abandoned, as Dosalo, the nearest point for crossing the Po, was still seven miles distant. By this time the sun was out in all its force, and the heat was by no means agreeable. Then there was dust, too, as if the *carrettieri* had been passing in hundreds, so that the heat was almost unbearable. At last the Dosalo ferry was reached, the road leading to it was entered, and the carriage was, I thought, to be at once embarked, when a drove of oxen were discovered to have the precedence ; and so I had to wait. This under such a sun, on a shadeless beach, and with the prospect of having to stay there for two hours at least, was by no means pleasant. It took three-quarters of an hour to put the oxen in the boat, it took half an hour to get them on the other shore, and another hour to have the ferry boat back. The panorama from the beach was splendid, the Po appeared in all the mighty power of his waters, and as you looked with the glass at oxen and trees on the other shore, they appeared to be clothed in all the colours of the rainbow, and as if belonging to another world. Several peasants were waiting for the boat near me, talking about the

war and the Austrians, and swearing they would, if possible, annihiliate some of the latter. I gave them the glass to look with, and I imagined that they had never seen one before, for they thought it highly wonderful to make out what the time was at the Luzzara Tower, three miles in a straight line on the other side. The revolver, too, was a subject of great admiration, and they kept turning, feeling, and staring at it, as if they could not make out which way the cartridges were put in. One of these peasants, however, was doing the grand with the others, and once on the subject of history related to all who would hear how he had been to St. Helena, which was right in the middle of Moscow, where it was so very cold that his nose had got to be as large as his head. The poor man was evidently mixing one night's tale with that of the next one, a tale probably heard from the old Sindaco, who is at the same time the schoolmaster, the notary, and the highest municipal authority in the place.

I started in the ferry boat with them at last. While crossing they got to speak of the priests, and were all agreed, to put it in the mildest way, in thinking extremely little of them, and only differed as to what punishment they should like them to suffer.

On the side where we landed lay heaps of ammunition-casks for the corps besieging Borgoforte. Others were conveyed upon cars by my friends the *carrettieri*, of whom it was decreed I should not be quit for some time to come. Entering Guastalla I found only a few artillery officers, evidently in charge of what we had seen carried along the route. Guastalla is a neat little town very proud of its statue of Duke Ferrante Gonzaga, and the Croce Rossa is a neat little inn, which may be proud of a smart young waiter, who actually discovered that, as I wanted to proceed to Luzzara, a few miles on,

I had better stop till next morning. I did not take his advice, and was soon under the gate of Luzzara, a very neat little place, once one of the many possessions where the Gonzagas had a court, a palace, and a castle. The arms over the archway may still be seen, and would not be worth any notice but for a remarkable work of terra-cotta representing a crown of pines and pine leaves in a wonderful state of preservation. The whole is so artistically arranged and so natural, that one might believe it to be one of Luca della Robbia's works. Luzzara has also a great tower, which I had seen in the distance from Dosalo, and the only albergo in the place gives you an excellent Italian dinner. The wine might please one of the greatest admirers of sherry, and if you are not given feather beds, the beds are at least clean like the rooms themselves. Here, as it was getting too dark, I decided upon stopping, a decision which gave me occasion to see one of the finest sunsets I ever saw. As I looked from the albergo I could see a gradation of colours, from the purple red to the deepest of sea blue, rising like an immense tent from the dark green of the trees and the fields, here and there dotted with little white houses, with their red roofs, while in front the Luzzara Tower rose majestically in the twilight. As the hour got later the colours deepened, and the lower end of the immense curtain gradually disappeared, while the stars and the planets began shining high above. A peasant was singing in a field near by, and the bells of a church were chiming in the distance. Both seemed to harmonise wonderfully. It was a scene of great loveliness.

At four a.m. I was up, and soon after on the road to Reggiolo, and then to Gonzaga. Here the vegetation gets to be more luxuriant, and every inch of ground contributes to the immense vastness of the whole. Nature is here in full perfection, and as even the

telegraphic wire hangs leisurely down from tree to tree, instead of being stuck upon poles, you feel that the romantic aspect of the place is too beautiful to be encroached upon. All is peace, beauty, and happiness, all reveals to you that you are in Italy.

In Gonzaga, which only a few days ago belonged to the Austrians, the Italian tricolour is out of every window. As the former masters retired the new advanced, and when a detachment of Monferrato lancers entered the old castle town the joy of the inhabitants seemed to be almost bordering on delirium. The lancers soon left, however. The flag only remains.

July 11.

Cialdini began passing the Po on the 8th, and crossed at three points, *i.e.*, Carbonara, Carbonarola, and Follonica. Beginning at three o'clock in the morning, he had finished crossing upon the two first pontoon bridges towards midnight on the 9th. The bridge thrown up at Follonica was still intact up to seven in the morning on the 10th, but the troops and the military and the civil train that remained followed the Po without crossing to Stellata, in the supposed direction of Ponte Lagoscura.

Yesterday guns were heard here at seven o'clock in the morning, and up to eleven o'clock, in the direction of Legnano, towards, I think, the Adige. The firing was lively, and of such a nature as to make one surmise that battle had been given. Perhaps the Austrians have awaited Cialdini under Legnano, or they have disputed the crossing of the Adige. Rovigo was abandoned by the Austrians in the night of the 9th and 10th. They have blown up the Rovigo and Boara fortresses, have destroyed the *tête-de-pont* on the Adige, and burnt all bridges. They may now seek to keep by

the left side of this river up to Legnano, so as to get under the protection of the quadrilateral, in which case, if Cialdini can cross the river in time, the shock would be almost inevitable, and would be a reason for yesterday's firing. They may also go by rail to Padua, when they would have Cialdini between them and the quadrilateral. In any case, if this general is quick, or if they are not too quick for him, according to possible instructions, a collision is difficult to be avoided.

Baron Ricasoli has left Florence for the camp, and all sorts of rumours are afloat as to the present state of negotiations as they appear unmistakably to exist. The opinions are, I think, divided in the high councils of the Crown, and the country is still anxious to know the result of this state of affairs. A splendid victory by Cialdini might at this moment solve many a difficulty. As it is, the war is prosecuted everywhere except by sea, for Garibaldi's forces are slowly advancing in the Italian Tyrol, while the Austrians wait for them behind the walls of Landaro and Ampola. The Garibaldians' advanced posts were, by the latest news, near Darso.

The news from Prussia is still contradictory; while the Italian press is unanimous in asking with the country that Cialdini should advance, meet the enemy, fight him, and rout him if possible. Italy's wishes are entirely with him.

NOALE, NEAR TREVISO, *July* 17, 1866.

From Lusia I followed General Medici's division to Motta, where I left it, not without regret, however, as better companions could not easily be found, so kind were the officers and jovial the men. They are now encamped around Padua, and will to-morrow march on Treviso, where the Italian Light Horse have already arrived, if I judge so from their having left Noale on

the 15th. From the right I hear that the advanced posts have proceeded as far as Mira on the Brenta, twenty kilometres from Venice itself, and that the first army corps is to concentrate opposite Chioggia. This corps has marched from Ferrara straight on to Rovigo, which the forward movement of the fourth, or Cialdini's *corps d'armée*, had left empty of soldiers. General Pianell has still charge of it, and Major-General Cadalini, formerly at the head of the Siena brigade, replaces him in the command of his former division. General Pianell has under him the gallant Prince Amadeus, who has entirely recovered from his chest wound, and of whom the brigade of Lombardian grenadiers is as proud as ever. They could not wish for a more skilled commander, a better superior officer, and a more valiant soldier. Thus the troops who fought on the 24th June are kept in the second line, while the still fresh divisions under Cialdini march first, as fast as they can. This, however, is of no avail. The Italian outposts on the Piave have not yet crossed it, for the reason that they must keep distances with their regiments, but will do so as soon as these get nearer to the river. If it was not that this is always done in regular warfare, they could beat the country beyond the Piave for a good many miles without even seeing the shadow of an Austrian. To the simple private, who does not know of diplomatic imbroglios and of political considerations, this sudden retreat means an almost as sudden retracing of steps, because he remembers that this manœuvre preceded both the attacks on Solferino and on Custozza by the Austrians. To the officer, however, it means nothing else than a fixed desire not to face the Italian army any more, and so it is to him a source of disappointment and despondency. He cannot bear to think that another battle is improbable,

and may be excused if he is not in the best of humour when on this subject. This is the case not only with the officers but with the volunteers, who have left their homes and the comfort of their domestic life, not to be paraded at reviews, but to be sent against the enemy. There are hundreds of these in the regular army—in the cavalry especially, and the Aosta Lancers and the regiment of Guides are half composed of them. If you listen to them, there ought not to be the slightest doubt or hesitation as to crossing the Isongo and marching upon Vienna. May Heaven see their wishes accomplished, for, unless crushed by sheer force, Italy is quite decided to carry war into the enemy's country.

The decisions of the French government are looked for here with great anxiety, and not a few men are found who predict them to be unfavourable to Italy. Still, it is hard for every one to believe that the French emperor will carry things to extremities, and increase the many difficulties Europe has already to contend with.

To-day there was a rumour at the mess table that the Austrians had abandoned Legnano, one of the four fortresses of the quadrilateral. I do not put much faith in it at present, but it is not improbable, as we may expect many strange things from the Vienna government. It would have been much better for them, since Archduke Albert spoke in eulogistic terms of the king, of his sons, and of his soldiers, while relating the action of the 24th, to have treated with Italy direct, thus securing peace, and perhaps friendship, from her. But the men who have ruled so despotically for years over Italian subjects cannot reconcile themselves to the idea that Italy has at last risen to be a nation, and they even take slyly an opportunity to throw new insult into her face. You can easily see that the old spirit is still struggling for empire ; that the old contempt is still

trying to make light of Italians; and that the old Metternich ideas are still fondly clung to. Does not this deserve another lesson? Does not this need another Sadowa to quiet down for ever? Yes; and it devolves upon Italy to do it. If so, let only Cialdini's army alone, and the day may be nigh at hand when the king may tell the country that the task has been accomplished.

A talk on the present state of political affairs, and on the peculiar position of Italy, is the only subject worth notice in a letter from the camp. Everything else is at a standstill, and the movements of the fine army Cialdini now disposes of, about 150,000 men, are no longer full of interest. They may, perhaps, have some as regards an attack on Venice, because Austrian soldiers are still garrisoning it, and will be obliged to fight if they are assailed. It is hoped, if such is the case, that the beautiful queen of the Adriatic will be spared a scene of devastation, and that no new Haynau will be found to renew the deeds of Brescia and Vicenza.

The king has not yet arrived, and it seems probable he will not come for some time, until indeed the day comes for Italian troops to make their triumphal entry into the city of the Doges.

The heat continues intense, and this explains the slowness in advancing. As yet no sickness has appeared, and it must be hoped that the troops will be healthy, as sickness tries the *morale* much more than half-a-dozen Custozzas.

P.S.—I had finished writing when an officer came rushing into the inn where I am staying and told me that he had just heard that an Italian patrol had met an Austrian one on the road out of the village, and routed it. This may or may not be true, but it was most curious to see how delighted every one was at the idea that they had found 'them' at last. They did

not care much about the result of the engagement, which, as I said, was reported to have been favourable. All that they cared about was that they were close to the enemy. One cannot despair of an army which is animated with such spirits. You would think, from the joy which brightens the face of the soldiers you meet now about, that a victory had been announced for the Italian arms.

DOLO, NEAR VENICE, *July* 20, 1866.

I returned from Noale to Padua last evening, and late in the night I received the intimation at my quarters that cannon was heard in the direction of Venice. It was then black as in Dante's hell, and raining and blowing with violence—one of those Italian storms which seem to awake all the earthly and heavenly elements of creation. There was no choice for it but to take to the saddle, and try to make for the front. No one who has not tried it can fancy what work it is to find one's way along a road on which a whole *corps d'armée* is marching with an enormous *matériel* of war in a pitch dark night. This, however, is what your special correspondent was obliged to do. Fortunately enough, I had scarcely proceeded as far as Ponte di Brenta when I fell in with an officer of Cialdini's staff, who was bound to the same destination, namely, Dolo. As we proceeded along the road under a continuous shower of rain, our eyes now and then dazzled by the bright serpent-like flashes of the lightning, we fell in with some battalion or squadron, which advanced carefully, as it was impossible for them as well as for us to discriminate between the road and the ditches which flank it, for all the landmarks, so familiar to our guides in the daytime, were in one dead level of blackness. So it was that my companion and myself, after stumbling

into ditches and out of them, after knocking our horses' heads against an ammunition car, or a party of soldiers sheltered under some big tree, found ourselves, after three hours' ride, in this village of Dolo. By this time the storm had greatly abated in its violence, and the thunder was but faintly heard now and then at such a distance as to enable us distinctly to hear the roar of the guns. Our horses could scarcely get through the sticky black mud, into which the white suffocating dust of the previous days had been turned by one night's rain. We, however, made our way to the parsonage of the village, for we had already made up our minds to ascend the steeple of the church to get a view of the surrounding country and a better hearing of the guns if possible. After a few words exchanged with the sexton—a staunch Italian, as he told us he was—we went up the ladder of the church spire. Once on the wooden platform, we could hear more distinctly the boom of the guns, which sounded like the broadsides of a big vessel. Were they the guns of Persano's long inactive fleet attacking some of Brondolo's or Chioggia's advanced forts ? Were the guns those of some Austrian man-of-war which had engaged an Italian ironclad ; or were they the ' Affondatore,' which left the Thames only a month ago, pitching into Trieste ? To tell the truth, although we patiently waited two long hours on Dolo church spire, when both I and my companion descended we were not in a position to solve either of these problems. We, however, thought then, and still think, they were the guns of the Italian fleet which had attacked an Austrian fort.

Civita Vecchia, *July* 22, 1866.

Since the departure from this port of the old hospital ship ' Grégéois ' about a year ago, no French ship of war

had been stationed at Civita Vecchia ; but on Wednesday morning the steam-sloop ' Catinat,' 180 men, cast anchor in the harbour, and the commandant immediately on disembarking took the train for Rome and placed himself in communication with the French ambassador. I am not aware whether the Pontifical government had applied for this vessel, or whether the sending it was a spontaneous attention on the part of the French emperor, but, at any rate, its arrival has proved a source of pleasure to His Holiness, as there is no knowing what may happen in troublous times like the present, and it is always good to have a retreat insured.

Yesterday it was notified in this port, as well as at Naples, that arrivals from Marseilles would be, until further notice, subjected to a quarantine of fifteen days in consequence of cholera having made its appearance at the latter place. A sailing vessel which arrived from Marseilles in the course of the day had to disembark the merchandise it brought for Civita Vecchia into barges off the lazaretto, where the yellow flag was hoisted over them. This vessel left Marseilles five days before the announcement of the quarantine, while the ' Prince Napoleon ' of Valery's Company, passenger and merchandise steamer, which left Marseilles only one day before its announcement, was admitted this morning to free pratique. Few travellers will come here by sea now.

MARSEILLES, *July* 24.

Accustomed as we have been of late in Italy to almost hourly bulletins of the progress of hostilities, it is a trying condition to be suddenly debarred of all intelligence by finding oneself on board a steamer for thirty-six hours without touching at any port, as was my case in coming here from Civita Vecchia on board the ' Prince Napoleon.' But, although telegrams were wanting,

discussions on the course of events were rife on board among the passengers who had embarked at Naples and Civita Vecchia, comprising a strong batch of French and Belgian priests returning from a pilgrimage to Rome, well supplied with rosaries and chaplets blessed by the Pope and *facsimiles* of the chains of St. Peter. Not much sympathy for the Italian cause was shown by these gentlemen or the few French and German travellers who, with three or four Neapolitans, formed the quarter-deck society ; and our Corsican captain took no pains to hide his contempt at the dilatory proceedings of the Italian fleet at Ancona. We know that the Prussian minister, M. d'Usedom, has been recently making strenuous remonstrances at Ferrara against the slowness with which the Italian naval and military forces were proceeding, while their allies, the Prussians, were already near the gates of Vienna ; and the conversation of a Prussian gentleman on board our steamer, who was connected with that embassy, plainly indicated the disappointment felt at Berlin at the rather inefficacious nature of the diversion made in Venetia, and on the coast of Istria by the army and navy of Victor Emmanuel. He even attributed to his minister an expression not very flattering either to the future prospects of Italy as resulting from her alliance with Prussia, or to the fidelity of the latter in carrying out the terms of it. I do not know whether this gentleman intended his anecdote to be taken *cum grano salis*, but I certainly understood him to say that he had deplored to the minister the want of vigour and the absence of success accompanying the operations of the Italian allies of Prussia, when His Excellency replied : ' C'est bien vrai. Ils nous ont trompés ; mais que voulez-vous y faire maintenant ? Nous aurons le temps de les faire égorger après.'

It is difficult to suppose that there should exist a preconceived intention on the part of Prussia to repay the sacrifices hitherto made, although without a very brilliant accompaniment of success, by the Italian government in support of the alliance, by making her own separate terms with Austria and leaving Italy subsequently exposed to the vengeance of the latter, but such would certainly be the inference to be drawn from the conversation just quoted.

It was only on arriving in the port of Marseilles, however, that the full enmity of most of my travelling companions towards Italy and the Italians was manifested. A sailor, the first man who came on board before we disembarked, was immediately pounced upon for news, and he gave it as indeed nothing less than the destruction, more or less complete, of the Italian fleet by that of the Austrians. At this astounding intelligence the Prussian burst into a yell of indignation. 'Fools! blockheads! *misérables!* Beaten at sea by an inferior force! Is that the way they mean to reconquer Venice by dint of arms? If ever they do regain Venetia it will be through the blood of our Brandenburghers and Pomeranians, and not their own.' During this tirade a little old Belgian in black, with the chain of St. Peter at his buttonhole by way of watchguard, capered off to communicate the grateful news to a group of his ecclesiastical fellow-travellers, shrieking out in ecstasy: 'Rossés, Messieurs! Ces blagueurs d'Italiens ont été rossés par mer, comme ils avaient été rossés par terre.' Whereupon the reverend gentlemen congratulated each other with nods, and winks, and smiles, and sundry fervent squeezes of the hand. The same demonstrations would doubtless have been made by the Neapolitan passengers had they belonged to the Bourbonic faction, but they happened to be honest traders with cases of

coral and lava for the Paris market, and therefore they merely stood silent and aghast at the fatal news, with their eyes and mouths as wide open as possible. I had no sooner got to my hotel than I inquired for the latest Paris journal, when the *France* was handed me, and I obtained confirmation in a certain degree of the disaster to the Italian fleet narrated by the sailor, although not quite in the same formidable proportions.

Before quitting the subject of my fellow-passengers on board the 'Prince Napoleon' I must mention an anecdote related to me, respecting the state of brigandage, by a Russian or German gentleman, who told me he was established at Naples. He was complaining of the dangers he had occasionally encountered in crossing in a diligence from Naples to Foggia on business; and then, speaking of the audacity of brigands in general, he told me that last year he saw with his own eyes, in broad daylight, two brigands walking about the streets of Naples with messages from captured individuals to their relations, mentioning the sums which had been demanded for their ransoms. They were unarmed, and in the common peasants' dresses, and whenever they arrived at one of the houses to which they were addressed for this purpose, they stopped and opened a handkerchief which one of them carried in his hand, and took out an ear, examining whether the ticket on it corresponded with the address of the house or the name of the resident. There were six ears, all ticketed with the names of the original owners in the handkerchief, which were gradually dispensed to their families in Naples to stimulate prompt payment of the required ransoms. On my inquiring how it was that the police took no notice of such barefaced operations, my informant told me that, previous to the arrival of these brigand emissaries in town, the chief always wrote to the police authorities

warning them against interfering with them, as the messengers were always followed by spies in plain clothes belonging to the band who would immediately report any molestation they might encounter in the discharge of their delicate mission, and the infallible result of such molestation would be first the putting to death of all the hostages held for ransom ; and next, the summary execution of several members of gendarmery and police force captured in various skirmishes by the brigands, and held as prisoners of war.

Such audacity would seem incredible if we had not heard and read of so many similar instances of late.

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